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1847/48

THIRD
ANNUAL REPORT
ON THE
COMMON SCHOOLS
OF VERMONT,
1848.

THIRD
ANNUAL REPORT
OF THE
STATE SUPERINTENDENT
OF
COMMON SCHOOLS,
Made to the Legislature of Vermont,
NOVEMBER, 1848.

ST. ALBANS, VT.:

E. B. WHITING, PRINTER.

1848.

N. B. Town Clerks, with whom copies of this Report are left, will distribute them as follows: One to each Town Superintendent; one to the Representative of the town in the last legislature; one to the County Senator, if a resident of the town; one to the Principal of the Academy or High School, if there be any in the town; one to each District Clerk; and one to remain in the hands of the Town Clerk.

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R E P O R T .

Agreeably to the provisions of law, the State Superintendent of Common Schools herewith submits to the Legislature the following, as his Third Annual Report :

In attempting to estimate the progress made in an educational enterprise, for the purpose of exhibiting its true amount or extent to the view of those who have not themselves observed it, there is ever a difficulty found in the want of some fixed and definite standard by which such progress may be ascertained and determined, so as to serve the purpose of clear and accurate description. We cannot apply to it lines whose length numbers can define, nor measure it by means of any known quantities. If a railway is to be built, the simple statement that it has been graded for a certain number of miles, or that the rails have been laid for some specified distance, will serve to convey to the mind a clear and distinct idea of the progress which the work has made. Or the declaration that the engine, with its obsequious train, was traversing the road from some certain starting-point to a given terminus, would suffice to assure us that the projected enterprise had reached its full completion.

But we have, as already suggested, no such exact modes of describing the growth and development of mind, and the advancement of moral culture, whether we regard them as results to be wrought upon individuals, or have in view an aggregate effect to be produced upon a community. We may tell of the extended number of studies in which pupils have been taught, or of the number of books or pages whose contents have been scanned in a given length of time. But to the intelligent this would be the most unsatisfactory mode of measuring attainments, or of describ-

ing the rate of progress. Rather it should be said, that facts of this kind are most inconclusive evidence of any progress at all, in the attainment of the true ends of education. We must, therefore, be content to regard the subject of educational improvement as one to which numbers have no relation, and to receive, as satisfactory, those general statements and declarations to which the exactness and precision of mathematical language do not appertain. For to refuse our credence to the assertion that in a given case a work of improvement is going on, merely because it cannot be estimated by quantity or described by numbers, would be no less absurd than to deny that darkness can ever turn to day, because we cannot count or measure the increasing brightness of the kindling dawn.

But the actual improvement effected in a work of the character contemplated, is not only incapable of exact measurement, but it goes on, to a great extent, unseen. And hence there is a difficulty not only in describing its amount or extent, but also in ascertaining and appreciating its reality. It is unseen, at least, by the hasty and careless observer. In a work in which changes are to be wrought in the form, position or relations of mere inanimate matter, progress is visible and palpable. In the construction of a rail-road,—to which allusion has already been made,—as hill after hill is cut through, and valley after valley is filled up to the contemplated grade, no closely scrutinizing and prolonged observation is needed to give assurance that the work proceeds.—Progress can not only be estimated and described, but be seen; and that, too, with no labor beyond a hasty glance. But in advancing an educational enterprise, the results aimed at, instead of obtruding themselves upon the notice and forcibly arresting the attention, are effected quietly and silently,—leaving behind no trace or substantial evidence of their accomplishment, of which the senses can take direct cognizance. We must wait to see expanded and invigorated mind, called into exercise by appropriate place, time and circumstances, giving us, on the theatre of action, evidence and assurance of the power it has gained; and of the conquests it is capable of achieving;—to see moral culture displaying its reality as fit occasion may be furnished, in deeds of beneficence and kindness,—before we can feel a full and undoubting

assurance that intellectual growth and moral improvement, hidden as their course has been, have, nevertheless, been steadily advancing.

Again, in the work of education, progress is, of necessity, gradual and slow, as well as unseen and incapable of measurement. While effects upon dead matter may be produced at a rate of rapidity proportioned to the force applied and the skill exercised in the application of that force, all *organized* matter, whether endowed with *animal*, or simply with *vegetable* life, has its fixed laws of growth, developement, and progress to maturity, which no appliances of art can compel it to transcend. And certainly none the less fixed and inflexible are the laws which govern the development of mind and the formation of moral character.—These processes may, it is true, within certain limits be accelerated; but they can never be made to exceed a certain rate of progress. And the same truth holds good not only in regard to the process of education itself, and to the attainment of those ends which education aims at as the general result of its labors, but also in regard to the work of constructing and putting in operation a thorough and proper system of measures, designed to secure to a community mental and moral improvement,—because, in performing the work, mind, to a great extent, is the material to be wrought upon. Prejudices are to be removed; conviction is to be produced; interest to be awakened; and exertion to be stimulated, before that concurrence of plans and purposes and that concentration of effort can be secured, which are necessary on the part of the community in order to prepare and put in successful operation the requisite means and appliances. A revolution, to a greater or less extent, is to be effected before the final results aimed at can, with truth, be said to have begun to be wrought out;—a revolution in men's views, feelings and objects of interest. In short, as an incipient step, a work of education itself has to be performed, and that, too, upon those most difficult of all to be educated,—those whose habits and opinions are already formed and consolidated after a faulty model, and must, of course, be broken down and moulded and formed anew. And in view of such an undertaking a Roman might well exclaim,—“*Hic labor, hoc opus est!*” Well might one understanding the

difficulties of the task, address himself to it with some occasional misgivings and deep solicitude. For while the chemist can easily break down the misshapen petrification and give its elements new form, there sometimes occurs, (as an extreme case, we might hope,) an analogous malformation of mind and heart, which the words of wisdom assure us even "braying in a mortar" will not remedy.

But there is still another point of essential difference between an undertaking which finds its accomplishment in the production of physical effects, and one in which mind and soul are the subjects of our labor. When the rail-road permits the long train of laden cars to traverse its smooth and equable way successfully, from point to point, it may be affirmed that the work to that extent is completed. But in an enterprise which aims to mature and sustain in effective operation a system of education for a community, and to secure to that community, as a result, the highest attainable elevation in moral worth and intellectual power, we cannot look forward to a time when, no longer needing the aid of numbers to define and describe our progress, we may affirm, in general yet distinctly intelligible terms, that our work is done. That day is not to be anticipated, when the difficulty of imparting a clear and distinct idea of the amount of a progressive labor which has been performed, shall have vanished in our ability to say that our system of public instruction has been brought to full perfection, and is working out its full and perfect results. And if any have been fondly looking forward to such a period, and that too, perchance, at no great distance, they need to learn anew, and more correctly, the nature of the human soul.

Nor should it surprise us that the means of education even under the most favored circumstances, or where the greatest amount of effort has been put forth to extend and improve them, are yet far from having attained that degree of perfection of which we may form some distinct conception. In no undertaking can we at once realize our ideal of what is desirable, even after it has assumed a distinct and well-defined form. Those improvements, even, which pertain directly to our physical well-being, much as they engross human interest and attention are, confessedly, as yet far from having reached the limits of that perfection which

lies clearly in our view. The face of the earth as fitted for the abode of man, and as possessing yet untested capabilities of ministering to his comfort and enjoyment, has not yet drawn nigh to that improvement in its condition of which we know it to be susceptible. What untold modifications of its surface that have been projected, either with the view of facilitating human intercourse, or of advancing human welfare in some other form, remain yet to be wrought out ! What solid mountains are to be sundered or pierced ; what barren wastes to be fertilized ; what lands to be reclaimed from the ocean ; what new water-courses are to be opened ; what rivers, now obstructed, are to flow in unimpeded course ; and what bays, now swept by wind and wave, are to be converted into safe, sheltered, and sheltering harbors ! And still that degree of improvement which lies at the uttermost verge to which fancy has ever extended her prospective gaze, may yet be found lying far hitherward of proximity to attainable perfection.

And could we presume that the mind and soul of man possess capabilities and powers more limited, or more easily and readily developed, than those of the sluggish and insensate earth,—which, governed by fixed and eternal laws, has no adverse will to oppose resistance to human energy ? That to expand and fashion the intellect and heart according to our desire, were a lighter and shorter task than to mould and shape the ground on which we tread ? Could we suppose that the work of education as concerned in framing a system of agencies and means for developing the mind and elevating and expanding the soul to the utmost extent of their capabilities and powers, might be near its full completion ;—nearer even than that grosser work which has so much absorbed man's interest and engaged his efforts through every age ? Or could we dream that the labor of applying the means of mental and moral culture was soon to be fully and finally completed,—so as no longer to employ our efforts, or demand our care ?

If there are those who have entertained such false opinions, and indulged in such delusive expectations, the Superintendent, in presenting his report, can only meet them with disappointment in regard to the past, and discouragement in relation to the future.

They must be told that the haste and carelessness of their observation and the flightiness of their fancy, unchastened by sober reason, and untaught by truthful experience, have led them far into the region of shadows, and that the hopes they have been cherishing are but idle dreams.

But if there are those who have been wandering in error, and indulging unreasonable expectations in regard to this or other points which have been presented, there are, nevertheless, those also who observe more closely and judge more correctly. There are those who can recognize the importance of things which their eyes may not see, nor their ears hear; those who, impressed with such truths as have been brought to view, can appreciate and acknowledge a progress and an improvement which no standard of quantity can measure, nor numbers define; and those, too, who feel that the work of education, still and unseen as may be its movements, and quiet as may be its achievements, is, nevertheless, a work which involves interests vast as human welfare,—one that, in fact, involves human welfare itself, in all its various forms and relations, because it has charge of all the means of protecting and advancing it. And to such, the present Annual Report, whether of work performed and results attained, or of difficulties still to be encountered and toil still to be endured,—can be presented without any apprehension that their reasonable expectations will be disappointed, or that the prospect for the future will be made to appear less brilliant and enchanting than they had dreamed.

It is true that each successive year in the enterprize of advancing the cause of education in the State, may perchance develop some deficiencies and faults before unnoticed, or not fully apprehended; and these fidelity would require the superintendent to expose, whenever they become to him apparent. But even so far as these are concerned, it is something gained to know the sources and nature of our danger, so that we may be prepared to apply the remedy.

There are, however, some more cheering relations to be given,—some accounts of purposes attained, of good accomplished, of evils removed or mitigated, of great and lasting benefits conferred. Mingled, it is true these recitals must be with the narration of reforms still demanded, the exposition of errors still pre-

vailing, and the rehearsal of deficiencies and neglects still existing, and operating to the injury of our children, and perchance threatening ultimate danger to the community at large. And these without doubt assume a greater prominence, and give a darker hue of the general representation than we might wish consistency with truth would require. But the Ostrich, by hiding her head in the sand, avoids not the hunter's spear; and justice to the State, whose interest in reference to the cause of public education the Superintendent is sacredly bound to watch and serve, so far as lies within his province or his power, compels him to exhibit facts as they present themselves, whether of lighter or darker shade.

CONDITION OF SCHOOLS.

Under this head, the Superintendent deems it proper not only to embrace those directly and obviously pertinent facts which relate to the management and conduct of our schools; the prevailing character of the instruction given in them, and the general success which attends their operations by way of accomplishing those high purposes and ends which we aim to attain through the medium of our Common School system,—but also to present a general account of those extrinsic circumstances which have an important bearing upon the essential character of the school, and exert no feeble influence in determining the final success which attends its action. And in the first place it is proposed to give an account of the number and size of

SCHOOL DISTRICTS.

No report has been received from Franklin County, in consequence of the protracted illness of the Superintendent, whose well directed, active and earnest efforts, during the year, to advance the interests of common schools, in the county, have highly commended him to the confidence and esteem of the friends of educa-

tion. From Addison County, also, no returns have been received.* From the remaining counties, statistical tables, more or less complete, have been returned. These tables embrace reports of 1911 districts; and by referring to former returns to ascertain the number of districts in those counties and towns which have not been reported the present year, the whole number of districts in the state is found to be 2616. This number is less than that reported last year, by 30. It exhibits an *improvement*, but not a *satisfactory* one. It may not be practicable nor desirable to reduce the whole number so low as 2000; but a reduction of at least two or three hundred below the present number is believed to be a result both attainable and exceedingly desirable.

By taking the returns of the present year, and where none have been made referring to former returns, or estimating on some other fixed basis, it would appear that the whole number of children in the State, between the ages of 4 and 18 years, does not vary much from 98,000. It may exceed this number; but the Superintendent finds no evidence that it does so, in the returns received. But, by the census of 1840, it appears, from a process of calculation easily applied, that the number of children, between the ages just specified, then considerably exceeded 100,000. If, therefore, the estimate now given be correct, we must conclude either that the population of the State has decreased since 1840, or that the proportion which of the population *under* 18 years of age bears to that *above* it, has materially diminished. It is not improbable that the latter conclusion would be essentially the correct one. Such a result is common as communities advance in age; and the Superintendent has no doubt that another census will show that the suggested increase in the proportionate

* Subsequent to the preparation and presentation of this report, partial returns have been received from both Addison and Franklin Counties; and these, so far as they extend, are embraced in the tables given. But no notice is taken of them either in the body of the report or in the footings of the tables. In some instances they would vary the results stated in a slight degree, though in no case to such extent as to make the report, as it is, present any material error. Besides, these returns are so defective that they may not give a correct and fair exhibit, even for those Counties.

number of the aged has been taking place in this State. In 1840 the number between the ages of 4 and 18 was near $34\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. of the whole population. This same class now constitutes about $33\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. of the population of New-York, and about 30 per cent. only of the population of Massachusetts. Assuming that the number of our population has not decreased since 1840, $33\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. would give the 98,000 which has been estimated as the present number of children of legal school age in the State.

A reduction, like that which we have supposed, took place in the State between the years 1830 and 1840. For, while the whole population increased between those periods by upwards of 11,000, the children of school age, instead of increasing nearly 4,000, as they should have done to maintain their relative number, increased only 800 ;—being a reduction of the proportion of this class from more than 35 1-2 per cent. to 34 1-2.—And it might here be remarked that such a reduction need not alarm us. On the contrary, it is, up to a certain point, a favorable indication,—an evidence of increased average length of life, and a guarantee of a general state of prosperity.

A remark of similar purport to the foregoing, made in a former report, was received with some distrust of its correctness.—But it is sufficient to say, in explanation of the principle involved in it, that if *all* the children born in a community lived to the age of 70 years, instead of a large proportion of them being cut off in early life,—as is now the case,—one third ordinarily before the age of 5 years,—it is obvious that the proportion, which those in advanced life would bear to the young, would be much increased above the proportion which now obtains. And further, an increased proportion of those in a community who are of such age as to be able not only to provide for their own wants but to add something to the common stock, over those who instead of adding to this stock are subtracting from it, assumes an increased power of production and enlarged opportunity for accumulation ; and should be the pledge of increased general prosperity. The peculiar and distinguishing characteristic of a low, poor and miserable condition of society is, that vast numbers are born,—to die in infancy or early childhood, while few attain to vigor and maturity, and reach a good old age.

But we are concerned only with the main fact that the supposed change in the relative proportion of the old and the young may account for that decrease of the number of children of school age, which is inferable from the returns received, without supposing our aggregate population to be decreasing. Certain it is, the Superintendent would prefer accounting for the result in the manner stated, to finding an explanation in a decrease of our population. And if there be error in his conclusion, drawn under such a bias, the census of 1850 will expose it.

Be the explanation sought, however, what it may, if the estimate made be substantially accurate, the average number of scholars to each district varies but little from 37. Last year, it was put down at 36.6 ;—the increase, since that time, resulting from the diminution in the number of districts, already stated.—The present division of districts gives an average of about 16 families to each. The average amount paid annually for teachers' wages is near \$50 to each district ; or about \$3,12 for each family, and if the cost of board, fuel and other contingencies be added, the amount will be nearly doubled. Now suppose the number of districts in the State to be reduced by 400,—which is an average of less than two for each town,—and we should have an average of 44 scholars and 19 families to each district. Assuming the expense of supporting schools to remain the same, the expense for teachers' wages would be reduced from \$3,12 to \$2,62 for each family ; or, from \$1,35 for each scholar to \$1,13. Or, supposing the expense to each individual to remain as at present, the proposed reduction in the number of districts would provide for about 20 per cent. greater length of school ; or it might be made available to furnish our Schools with a better supply of proper apparatus and other facilities for their successful instruction. Or, there is yet another alternative for expending the balance saved, so that none need fear the reduction contemplated under an apprehension that any difficulty would arise in the disposition of it. It may be expended for some *other* purpose than the benefit of schools, *if a better use can be found for it.*

We assume that our districts are yet too small. And to show the actual working of the system of small districts, and its general bearing on the welfare of our Schools, the following table

has been constructed, giving, for the several counties, a connected view of the average number of scholars to a district; the average wages, per month, paid male and female teachers, respectively; the per centage of schools taught by females; the average amount of school for the year, in weeks; and the expense, per scholar, for teachers wages:

COUNTIES.	Schools per district.	Wages paid males.	Do. paid females.	Per cent. taught by females.	No. weeks school.	Expense per scholar.	
Addison,	43	\$14 02	\$5 66	71	30.0	\$1,38	7 towns.
Bennington,	43	13 45	5 70	70	28.4	1,33	
Caledonia,	34	13 44	5 02	68	22.7	1,27	
Chittenden,	46	12 48	4 87	66	24.2	1,25	5 towns.
Essex,	30	12 85	5 22	74	22.0	1,30	
Franklin,	51	12 58	4 67	69	26.6	92	5 towns.
Grand-Isle,	52	14 14	4 85	58	26.4	1,24	
Lamoille,	32	11 84	4 80	73	23.0	1,15	
Orange,	33	12 22	5 06	64	23.4	1,48	
Orleans,	36	12 03	5 37	66	23.0	1,17	
Rutland,	39	13 54	5 24	70	28.0	1,38	
Washington,	36	13 24	5 71	72	24.6	1,33	
Windham,	33	14 80	5 88	72	25.7	1,54	
Windsor,	36	13 34	5 44	67	25.5	1,44	
Av. by counties,	37	\$13 12	\$5 26	68	25.0	\$1,33	

Upon glancing at this table, some disadvantage, growing out of a comparatively small number of scholars to a district, will be apparent either in low wages, short schools, high cost per scholar, or, to some extent, all combined. And conversely, some correlative advantage will appear in large numbers to a district. Bennington County, with 43 scholars, by paying just the average cost per scholar, is enabled to pay considerably more than medium wages to teachers, and, at the same time, to secure more than 28 weeks school,—or more than 3 weeks above the average for the State. Caledonia, with only 34 scholars per district, pays but a

little less per scholar than Bennington, and although paying lower wages to teachers,—particularly to females,—is yet able to provide less than 23 weeks school; or more than 5 weeks less than Bennington. Essex, with but 30 scholars to a district, by paying low wages to teachers, employing 74 per cent. of female teaching, and paying about the usual amount per scholar, is yet able to furnish only 22 weeks school. Orange, with only 33 scholars to a district, paying low wages to teachers, and the highest expense per scholar of any county in the State, except Windham, is, nevertheless, able to secure only about 23 weeks school, or nearly 2 weeks less than the average for the State. Windham pays higher wages than any other county, but employs more than the usual proportion of female teaching, and has less than 26 weeks school in the year,—almost 3 weeks less than Bennington. Yet to provide even this length of school she is obliged to pay \$1,54 per scholar, in consequence of having so cut up her districts as to embrace, upon an average, only 33 scholars each. Or, to present the comparison in another form, Windham pays 8 per cent. higher wages to teachers than Bennington, but has 10 per cent. less school, and pays 16 per cent. more for it. Bennington and Washington agree exactly in the amount paid per scholar, and nearly so in the wages paid to teachers; but the adverse influence of small districts in the latter county is seen in the comparative length of their schools. But results similar to those specified, or almost indefinitely raised, yet all leading to the same general conclusion, may be observed in relation to every county.

But let us turn our particular attention to some of the towns in the State in which the division of districts has been carried to the utmost extreme. Bridgewater has 16 districts, with 24 scholars to each, on an average;

Corinth,	25	districts, with 25 scholars, each;			
Halifax,	16	"	"	22	"
Hubbardton,	9	"	"	22	"
Hydepark,	15	"	"	28	"
Marlboro,	16	"	"	24	"
Sheffield,	11	"	"	25	"
Stockbridge,	16	"	"	26	"

Sutton,	15	districts,	with	25	scholars,	each ;
Wheelock,	12	"	"	25	"	"
Walden,	15	"	"	26	"	"
Washington,	22	"	"	22	"	"

These 12 towns, containing 188 districts, have an average of less than 25 scholars to a district. And others might be named in which the result would be but a shade different.

Now the Superintendent admits that he is not sufficiently acquainted with the topography of *all* these towns to be able to judge accurately of the obstacles which may lie in the way of a consolidation of their districts. But in regard to *some* of them he is certain, that nature has not marked out the present narrow boundaries of their districts by walling them in with mountains whose summits are not to be scaled ; nor cut them off from safe and easy intercourse with the rest of the world by impassable fens.—Nor are they separated by pathless deserts, haunted by beasts of prey, or tangled swamps infested with alligators that might devour the luckless little urchin on his way to school. And so long as no such difficulty or danger exists, the Superintendent cannot but think that the inhabitants of such districts would do wisely to *enlarge* their *ideas*, and *extend* their *borders* ! He firmly believes they would find it to be, in Yankee phrase, a “very profitable speculation.” Even if no other beneficial end could be gained by the adoption of the measure, it would at least permit many of those nominally cheap, but really dear, teachers, who now find their paradise in these small districts, to engage in some pursuit by which they might be of some service to the community,—whether it were by chopping wood, taking care of cattle, or shovelling snow-drifts from the highway. And, in the mean time, the children of these small districts thus usefully broken up, might be transferred to larger ones, where they could be properly and profitably taught.

It is to be kept in mind in reference to the remarks made pertaining to the subject of the average number of scholars to a district, that it is an *average*,—not an *equal division*,—of which we have been speaking. We may presume that if the largest districts in the State, to the number of one third, or perhaps but one fourth, were set aside, the average number to each of the remain-

ing districts would not exceed 30. And are there not some hundreds of districts whose actual number of scholars is less than 20? In a single county there are 43 such districts. And if the number of districts in the State were reduced by a number equal to that of all the districts of this description, it is believed that nothing more in this direction would remain to be desired.

But each town must judge for itself what the best interest of its citizens,—their schools and their children,—requires in relation to this subject. The Superintendent deems it especially important that the public mind should be directed to this point at the present time, in view of the fact that more thought and attention are now, and we trust will continue to be, turned to the erection of suitable school-houses. And it is obviously important that a proper division and arrangement of districts should be a step precedent to the formation and execution of plans in regard to their buildings.

SCHOOL HOUSES.

During the year, there have been erected in the State, as reported by County Superintendents, 34 School-houses, at an aggregate expense of \$11,050; or an average cost of \$325, each;—besides several others of which the cost was not specified. Of those reported, Caledonia County alone,—to her credit be it stated,—erected 12, at a cost of \$5,800, or more than \$480, each. Such a result, for a single year, is believed to be entirely new in the history of the State. It affords practical evidence that our people are at least beginning to think about their school-houses, as well as their homes. Let but the present impulse on this subject be maintained, or rather *let a little be added to it*, and, in process of time, a far better class of edifices will take the place of those wretched structures—designed for places of instruction, but better adapted to ignoble purposes—in which the State abounds. But so painful is it to contemplate these penitentiaries,—so doubly painful to endure them,—we cannot but feel an impatient desire that the time should be hastened on, by the increased energy of our efforts, when they shall all have retired, as they ought long since to have done, from the face of the earth.

It is believed that much inconvenience is experienced, by districts desiring to erect new school-houses, from the want of proper information on the subject of school-house architecture. Suitable models are not within their reach ; nor is the requisite information in regard to the principles to be observed, and the purposes to be fulfilled, readily and easily accessible. But the nature of the difficulties and inconveniencies, which are to be encountered in this direction, was exhibited more fully in a former report, and needs not to be again discussed in this.

By way of removing the embarrassment, the Superintendent would respectfully recommend to the Legislature the plan of furnishing some approved treatise on school-house architecture to each town in the State, for the use of its several districts,—to be referred to and consulted whenever a school-house is to be built. The advantages of such a measure are so obvious that they need not be dwelt upon.

A work of the character suggested, in which a great variety of models is given, accompanied with those full and definite instructions in regard to the proper construction of school-houses which are so much needed, and embracing much other useful matter pertaining to the subject of schools, has been recently issued from the pen of Mr. Barnard, the able and distinguished Commissioner of Public Schools for the State of Rhode-Island.

The Superintendent has named this treatise because, for the purpose contemplated, he knows of no better work ; and he is disposed to say further,—that no better one is required.*

* A copy of "Barnard's School-house Architecture" was ordered by the Legislature to be furnished to each town ; and the Superintendent would suggest to the Town Clerk, in whose hands it will be deposited, to write in the book the name of the town and office, with a request that the book be returned to such office so soon as the purpose, for which it was taken away, has been answered. It is, of course, contemplated that a mere hasty inspection of the book at the Town Clerk's office will not meet the purpose which the work was intended to serve.

APPARATUS.

It is believed that more than five-sixths of our schools,—perhaps, seven-eighths of them,—are now competently furnished with black-boards; and that in many cases they are used by the teacher to a great extent, and that, too, successfully and profitably. The Secretary of the Maine Board of Education has aptly termed the black-board “the right arm of the true teacher.” Yet, two years since, it appeared that scarcely one third of our schools were furnished with it. And, three years since, it is believed that not even one sixth part were supplied with an article so indispensable to correct, thorough and successful instruction in *many* of the studies pursued in school, and so useful in *all*.

But the introduction of other proper apparatus for illustrating the various branches of science taught in our schools appears to be going on but slowly,—far more slowly than we could desire. Without the aid of such means of illustration as are afforded by Maps, Charts, Globes and the like, many of the common-school studies cannot be pursued with any hope that the pupil will acquire that clear and definite knowledge of them, without which his labor is essentially lost. Indeed, is it not, in many cases, even worse than lost? To pass over the liability to receive positively *false* impressions, is not the pupil, under such circumstances, in danger of acquiring and establishing that habit of contenting himself with a superficial and imperfect knowledge of things which will render him, through life, a shallow man? Or if the attempt be made to compensate for the want of proper facilities by increased exertion on the part of the teacher, and longer study on the part of the pupil, it must obviously be at a great expense of time and labor;—to say nothing of the doubtfulness of full success at last.

As an example, the Superintendent believes that a more clear and thorough knowledge of the Mathematical principles of Geography, and those elements of Astronomy which are so closely allied to Geography that they are expected to be, and must be,

taught in connection in all our common schools, can be obtained from one month's study with the aid of "Cornell's Globe," than could be gained in two months without such assistance. And the same principle holds true in regard to other branches of study, and the advantage to be derived from proper means and facilities for illustrating them.

TEXT-BOOKS.

With regard to the success, which has attended the measures adopted to secure a uniformity of text-books, the Superintendent has not received, from all parts of the State, such definite information as would enable him to present a comprehensive and general statement of results. In some quarters, however, where stability and steadiness of purpose have characterised the efforts put forth to remove that crying evil of a multiplicity of text-books, with which the State has been so severely afflicted, a good and satisfactory degree of success has followed. But the influence exerted to secure uniformity being purely a moral one, put forth only in the form of a recommendation, without any legal authority to give it effect, it is, of course, liable to be thwarted, to some extent, through caprice or conflicting motives of interest, and cannot be expected to accomplish its ends speedily.

By way of giving aid and direction to the plans of Town and County Superintendents, who, in connection, are authorized by law to recommend text-books to be used in the schools in their respective counties, a Convention of County Superintendents and such Town Superintendents as have seen fit to attend, has been held from year to year, since the establishment of our present system of supervision. The purpose of such convention has been to concentrate opinion in regard to the proper text-books to be used, and then to reflect back that concentrated and harmonized opinion upon the community,—there to command that confidence, and exert that influence, to which it might be fairly and justly entitled. The State Superintendent, in his circular to County Superintendents calling their first convention, especially

requested them to gather, as far as possible, the opinions of teachers and others who might feel an interest in the subject.

Still, these conventions, as such, have never claimed for themselves any authority in the matter beyond a moral one. This, however, it was hoped would be sustained and fortified by a consideration of the evils and disadvantages accruing from that multiplicity which has heretofore rendered every school house a Babel,—if a sufficient variety of treatises on a given subject, in the same original tongue, could make one. And it was hoped that the obvious and urgent importance of obviating the evils arising from this source,—evils which were burdening our schools, crippling their energies, and impairing their usefulness,—would be so deeply impressed upon every intelligent friend of schools, as to secure his cordial and earnest co-operation in the measures resorted to.

It is not arrogated in behalf of the action of these conventions that their recommendations were, in all cases, the best that could have been adopted. Differences of opinion in regard to the comparative merits of books, will, of course, exist. But whatever view may be taken of the books recommended, it is believed that, in all cases, recommendations were made by the vote of a majority of the convention after mature deliberation. And if, in any case, it should now seem that some better text-book might have been adopted, it is believed, nevertheless, that the loss, resulting from the use of that recommended, would be far less than that which would be sustained by encouraging and encountering the evils of multiplicity.

Whether more vigorous and authoritative measures may not yet have to be resorted to in order to furnish an adequate remedy for the evil is a question which experience must decide. It may be found advisable to clothe some competent, responsible Board with the requisite authority, in order to protect the public against that fluctuation and change to which they must be, to some extent, exposed under the present system.

As a list of the text-books, which have been recommended by the several State Conventions of Superintendents, has never been given to the public in a connected and convenient form, it has been thought proper to subjoin it here:

Sander's Primer, and Spelling-book ; Webster's Dictionary ; Town's Analysis ; Sander's First, Second, Third and Fourth Readers ; Palmer's Moral Instructor ; Randall's Educational Reader, and Moral Class-book ; The Bible,—to be used more especially for devotional purposes ; Smith's Geography, and Morse's Quarto for reference ; Mitchell's Outline Maps ; Wells' English Grammar, and Hallock's for reference ; Colburn's Intellectual Arithmetic ; Davies' Series,—with a temporary approbation of Daniel Adams' ; Mrs. Willard's History of the United States ; Shurtleff's Governmental Instructor ; Cutter's Anatomy and Physiology ; Ackerman's Natural History ; Holbrook's Elements of Drawing, and Root's Penmanship.

Before closing his remarks under this head, the Superintendent cannot forbear the expression of his deep regret at the general want, which still prevails in so large a proportion of our schools, of an adequate supply of proper text books, as well as of other facilities for proper and profitable instruction in whatever form. These means of knowledge cost but little, and the neglect to furnish them cannot be owing to any real want of ability on the part of parents to do so. Truth compels the Superintendent to say that he personally knows of no individual who appears to interest himself so deeply to have his children properly supplied with books, or to spend his money so cheerfully and freely for that purpose, as does a certain illiterate Irish woman within range of his observation, who, having an indigent blind man for a husband, is compelled to go from house to house and toil for the daily pittance of 25 cents, to aid in furnishing her family with bread, (when bread they have,) as well as to provide for her children the means of knowledge ! And what thousands among us have occasion to blush before such an example ! How many, before it, could plead poverty as an excuse for stinting their children in the needful facilities for acquiring an education, and yet hold up their heads ! If there be but a *desire* and a *will*, there will be found a *way*.

But it is especially painful to think that the proper means of knowledge should be so sparingly supplied, when they may be obtained at so cheap a rate. Should we be thus niggardly in furnishing them if they cost us gold where copper can buy them

now? Are they not, in fact, becoming too much like air and water,—so easily procured that we fail to estimate their value? Alas! that we should thus slight and spurn our blessings! Do we realize that through our neglect to furnish that which costs so little, our children are sustaining a loss which *neither tears, nor time, nor toil*, can ever repair.

STUDIES PURSUED IN SCHOOL.

The Superintendent has introduced this topic, not for the purpose of commenting, at this time, upon the general course of study pursued in our schools, but simply to suggest the propriety of extending the study of Geography in a particular direction. Embraced as Geology properly is, to some extent, under the head of physical Geography, it is believed that the outlines of this science might be appropriately taught in this connection, and that too with great advantage.

But the purpose is more especially to recommend this study in connection with a more minute study of the Geography of our own State. And, as a guide to the acquisition of the knowledge contemplated as desirable, the Superintendent would commend to notice a treatise on the "Geography and Geology of Vermont," recently published by the well-known author of the "Vermont Gazetteer." It is designed to furnish a more minute geographical account of the state than we could expect to find in a general treatise on Geography; and, as intimately connected with physical geography, the outlines of the science of geology are also presented, together with a general account of our rocks and soils. Such definitions and explanations are given as to bring the subject within reach of the capacity of pupils ten or twelve years old. And with the aid of a small collection of specimens, which might be obtained with but little expense, a practical knowledge of the science might be secured to every pupil in our common schools, that would enable him to recognize a familiar acquaintance that he can call by its own appropriate name, in every stone that he meets as he traverses the fields, or turns the earth at his daily toil. This would furnish him with ev-

er-pleasant subjects of thought, ever-delightful themes of contemplation.

It is not, by any means, anticipated that through the use of this book in our common schools, pupils will come out thorough and accomplished geologists. But, it is believed, that such a general knowledge of geology might be acquired as would not only serve to impart fresh interest to the exercises of the school, but exert a favorable influence on the pupil through life, by its tendency to allure him from the haunts of vice to those more enchanting scenes where nature unveils her loveliness and beauty, and displays to the admiring gaze of the intelligent observer the matchless wisdom of Him who created all.

And ought not more knowledge of nature, as it presents itself to our daily view, to be imparted in our schools? Is it not particularly desirable that the general information suggested, in regard to the structure and materials of the earth which bears us up, and from whose surface we derive our sustenance, should be furnished to all, with a view to its practical utility in the more common sense of the term, as well as in that higher sense which has been adverted to? Is it not especially desirable in relation to that large proportion of our children who are to till the soil as their main business employment in life?

The book referred to seems precisely adapted to supply a pressing want in our common schools, filling a place which, for our own State, has not heretofore been filled. For whatever view might be taken of the value added to the work by the geological matter which it contains, the usefulness of a book giving a more definite geographical description of the state than a general treatise could be expected to afford, will hardly be called in question.

As the book has no competitors for public favor, the Superintendent has deemed his commendation of it no departure from his established rule not in any case to forestall the action of the appropriate board for recommending books, where a choice is to be made. Indeed, it has not so much been his purpose to recommend the *book*, as to urge the study for which it serves as a text-book,—and the only one which we can have recourse to.

Some delicacy has, indeed, been felt in singling out and recommending any particular study beyond the present ordinary range,

when there is so much knowledge that is valuable, pressing upon us, from various quarters, respectively, its urgent claims. But our progress must be *step by step*; and thus step by step, our schools *can* and *must* go on to far higher attainments than they have yet reached or aspired to. Among the particular branches which, in addition to the usual studies pursued in our common schools, it is believed, should receive attention at an early period, is that of Anatomy and Physiology,—so far as may be necessary to secure a competent acquaintance with the laws of life and health. This study, the Superintendent would, perhaps, have publicly commended before the present time, but for the apprehension that, if his professional predilections had not led him to attach an undue importance to that knowledge whose object is to preserve health and life, yet a belief that such was the fact might be entertained, and operate to impair confidence in the opinions which might be expressed. But, perchance, by another year, the claims of this study may be specially urged upon the public attention.

ATTENDANCE.

The attendance upon the summer schools of 1847 would be appropriately embraced and noticed in this report. But the general facts pertaining to these schools, so far as returns had been received, were made public the last winter, through the medium of the "School Journal." And as the returns, received since that time, do not essentially vary the results then exhibited, it is deemed unnecessary to present them anew here. It will suffice to say, that these returns exhibit, for each school, an average daily attendance of 16 scholars of school age, and an average aggregate attendance of 25; being, for the districts reported, as compared with the attendance on winter schools, nearly in the ratio of 5 to 6. It appeared, however, that these returns, which were from but a small number of schools,—about 400 only,—were from a favorable class; and it is believed that 4 to 5 would express the ordinary ratio of attendance on summer and winter schools, more nearly than any other numbers. But, in any case, it is certain that the attendance in winter is considerably

larger than in summer,—a class of older pupils coming into the winter schools, in addition to those attending the summer schools. And, therefore, such comments as are to be made on the general subject of attendance, will be made in connection with an exhibition of the attendance on winter schools.

The returns of these schools exhibit a marked improvement since the previous year in the regularity of attendance,—if, indeed, we may be allowed to speak of improvement, while the evil in this respect is still so great. In 604 districts, in which 20,629 scholars attended school more or less, the average number in daily attendance for the whole length of the school, was 14,735; being about 71 per cent. of the whole number.—The returns for the previous winter exhibited an average daily attendance of only 67.6 per cent. of the whole number attending. Or, to state the matter in another form, the average number of days that each scholar attended school, the last winter, was 50, out of the 70 days constituting the average term of time for which the schools were taught. The winter previous, it was 47 days out of 70; and the winter still preceding, it was but 45 days out of 68. This shows a gradual improvement for each successive year,—small, it is true, yet distinctly appreciable.

But casualties, sickness, and other necessary causes of detention from the school, are far from being sufficient to account for the irregularity of attendance still exhibited. Other, and we fear more predominant, as well as less excusable, causes must be called in to explain it,—such as a failure to appreciate the evils, the embarrassment and loss, attendant upon it; and perchance a carelessness or forgetfulness of the value of those interests which are sacrificed by it. But if these faults mainly *account* for it, what,—let delinquents answer the inquiry,—what shall *justify* it?

But there is a far darker aspect, pertaining to this subject of attendance, to be presented, which should not be regarded with indifference or unconcern. It is one which should command our thoughtful and anxious attention, and challenge our most earnest efforts to change it. We here refer to the great numbers who are growing up in our State without attending the school at all. Thousands, in our small republic, growing up to manhood

without any systematic Education! Do our minds accurately take in the full fearful significance of this statement? Can they fully comprehend the danger it forebodes,—the ruin it may foretell?

In 604 districts, containing 24,848 children of school age, the attendance on school, the last winter, was as follows :

1400	attended	3½	months, or upward,	
3275	“	3	“	to 3½ months;
5323	“	2½	“	“ 3 “
3594	“	2	“	“ 2½ “
2687	“	1½	“	“ 2 “
1713	“	1	“	“ 1½ “
1409	“	1-2	“	“ 1 “
1228	“	less than		1-2 month;

Making 20,629 as the aggregate number that attended school. But of these, 253 were under four years of age, and 1179 over 18; making 1432 who were without the school age. This number, deducted from 20,629, leaves 19,197, as the number, of school age, who attended the district school. We may, however, add to this number 745, as the number attending Academies, Select Schools, &c.—being 3 per cent of the whole number of scholars in the districts reported,—although this is a somewhat more liberal allowance than the returns will warrant. This, then, would give 19,942 as the number of school age that attended either public or private schools; leaving 4,906, or very near 20 per cent of the 24,848, who were receiving no school instruction whatever.

Now taking these returns as the basis of an estimate for the whole State, and assuming the number of children of school age to be 98,000, we have the following results :

There attended school the last winter,

5,521	for	3 1-2 months or upward,
12,620	" 3	to 3 1-2 months,
20,992	" 2 1-2	" 3 "
14,173	" 2	" 2 1-2 "
10,597	" 1 1-2	" 2 "
6,755	" 1	" 1 1-2 "
5,557	" 1-2	" 1 "
4,843	"	less than 1-2 month ;

making 81,058 as the aggregate attendance.

Of these 5,648 were under 4 or over 18 ;

Leaving 75,410 of school age in the Common Schools.

Then 2,940, being 3 per cent. of 98,000, are supposed to have ——— been in other schools ; and adding this number we have 78,350 as the number of children between 4 and 18, who were attending public or private schools ; and leaving 19,630 who were not found the past winter in any school whatever.

But lest it should be fancied that there is some mistake in these estimates, we will present the result as actually ascertained in a single county. And, thanks to the indefatigable industry and zeal of the Superintendent of Bennington county, he has given us a complete record for every town and every school district within the limits of that county.

The county, as appears from the returns made to Town Clerks, the last winter, contained at that time 137 districts, and 5890 children of school age. Schools were taught the last winter in 126 of these districts, and a record was kept of the attendance upon each. From the records thus kept, it appears that 4335 children attended for a longer or shorter term of time,—which it is unnecessary here to state in detail. But of these, 201 were without the school age ; leaving 4134 as the number, of school age, that attended those 126 schools. It, however, appears that 340 attended Academies, Select Schools, &c. for an average term of about 6 months during the year. Of these we will suppose 300 to have been under 18 years of age, and add them.

This gives, as the number attending school, 4434 out of the 5890 scholars which the county contained; leaving 1456, who did not enter the school-house nor any other place of instruction! And this is not a matter of estimate, calculation, or conjecture. It is the development of a faithful record, embracing every scholar in the county.

Now, by the census of 1840, Bennington County contained less than 1-17 of the population of the State; and supposing this relative proportion not to have changed, if we take the above results as the basis of an estimate for the State, we shall find the number who do not enter the school-house, during a given winter, to be near 25,000. This number considerably exceeds the estimate previously given; but some of the counties exhibit a much more favorable aspect in this particular than Bennington does. In Caledonia County, for example, where perhaps more vigorous efforts have been put forth to advance the cause of common schools than in any other county in the State, a process of calculation like that applied for Bennington County, gives less than 10 per cent, as the proportion of children of school age that do not attend school. In Lamoille County it is about 15 per cent; in Orleans 19; and in the counties collectively, as already stated, very near 20 per cent. And, were we to add the number who attend school for a less term than one month, it would swell the number, not in school a sufficient length of time to answer any substantial purpose, to near 30,000!

But let us compare ourselves, in reference to this subject, with those around us. Three years since, Rhode-Island stood upon nearly the same ground as we now do; but her condition has, it is believed, very materially improved within that time. In Connecticut, about the same proportion as with us do not attend the common school; but a vastly greater proportion are found in private schools. In Massachusetts, the state of things is far more favorable than with us, whether in regard to the proportion who attend school, the regularity of their attendance, or the aggregate length of time for which their schools are taught. It would not flatter our pride to have the comparison made more definite. In New-York, the number attending school exceeds the whole number of children between the ages of 5

and 16 years. But how large a proportion of this attendance is from those without these ages cannot be stated. The condition of New Hampshire and Michigan is very similar to our own. In Maine, a considerable portion of the State being but newly settled, the neglect of the school is considerably greater than with us ;—nearly in the ratio of 3 to 2. But if the earnestness and energy which are now at work there shall be maintained, it will not be long,—unless *we* labor earnestly and vigorously, *too*,—before the miserable consolation of having others associated with us in delinquency and darkness, will be denied us from *that* quarter. Unless we are active, New Hampshire will, to adopt the phraseology of fashionable life,—soon “cut our acquaintance.” If we would look for companionship in our neglect, and the consequent depression, of the interests of education, it must at least be beyond the bounds of our own New-England. It may be that some of our sister states whose educational energies are weighed down by the burden of Slavery, may not be in a condition to decline our company, or discredit our claims to share their sympathies, in this particular, for some years to come. Perchance, too, for a time, we might find society on our northern border. Yet even there, amidst all the difficulties and discouragements which are to be encountered, the work of Education is going on with a zeal which promises that, from that quarter, companionship in educational delinquency, for *us* or *any other community*, is not destined to be perpetual.

But let us cast a single glance abroad. In Prussia it was ascertained some years since, that of 2,043,030 between 7 and 14 years of age, 2,021,421 were in public schools; leaving only 21,609 not attending them; and these were all supposed to be in private schools. Every human being enjoying the benefits of education under a monarchical government! Let republics see to it that they are not outdone!

But a higher and worthier principle than pride should stimulate our energies, and call forth our efforts. Philanthropy and patriotism appeal to us,—not simply to wipe out a reproach,—but to confer upon the ignorant the blessings of education, and to remove from our midst an element of danger, which, in some unexpected hour, may scatter desolation around us. The exemp-

tion of Vermont, hitherto, from every thing like mobs or popular outbreaks, has been with her a matter of honest pride. But let some occasion of popular commotion be thrown amongst us, and where but in the ranks of violence and disorder might we expect this mass of ignorance, now growing up in our midst, would be found? And is there not, without further accumulation, already enough of this mass, when aroused with its distorted views and excited passions, to seriously endanger the public peace and security? Is there not enough to make even the framework of our government totter?

The Superintendent does not,—dares not,—doubt that of the near 20,000 who, during the last winter *ought* to have been in the place of instruction, but *were not*, some either have been at some former period, or will be at some future one, in the way of acquiring, partially, the elements of a proper education. Were it otherwise, we might well fear that before another quarter of a century should elapse, Vermont would experience a revolution.—A monarchy might sustain itself and live on amidst such a mass of ignorance and debasement; but a *republican* government would, under adverse environments, go down beneath it. Or if it could, like the lifeless corpse, retain its form, still the life-giving spirit would no longer be there.

Probably, a portion of those of school age, who absent themselves from the school-room, may be made up of those between the age of 12 or 14 years, and 18; and who, perhaps, have attended school at an earlier period, but now regard their education as completed. But are such prepared to discharge faithfully and well the duties of social and private life? Are they fitted to be citizens of a government like ours; to be, as they must soon be, its lawgivers and rulers?

But the number, improperly absent from school, is far too great to be made up mainly of the class just alluded to. We are compelled to believe that the larger portion of them is composed of such as have never received instruction, and never will receive it, unless earnest effort is made to bring it within their reach,—or rather to bring them to accept of it. It is not improbable that many of these are children of foreign birth, or at least, of foreign parentage. But the importance of educating them is not, for this

reason, in the least diminished. On the contrary, the danger of neglecting it is, so far as our own personal interests are directly concerned, even greater than if they were allied to us by closer relative ties,—because no sympathy of kindredship now operates to restrain them from depredating upon our property, or; it may be, breaking into “the citadel of life.”

The Superintendent is conscious of no disposition to create any causeless alarm, or awaken in a single bosom any unnecessary apprehension in relation to this subject. It is his aim only to warn of real danger. And is there any thinking and reflecting man in the State who can look the facts presented boldly in the face, and say in view of them,—“*there is no danger?*”

The most available remedy for the evil we have been contemplating, is, probably, to be found in a provision for making our schools strictly free, by an enactment that no portion of the money raised by districts for their support shall be raised otherwise than by a tax on the list, irrespective of attendance; in apportioning public moneys upon the basis of attendance, so as to create in districts a motive to exert themselves to bring all into the school who *should* be there; and, generally, in arousing the community to determined and unrelaxing efforts to make sure the purpose, that every child in the State shall be brought to the place of instruction.

It has been suggested by an intelligent and observing Town superintendent that one prominent cause which operates to deter the children of foreigners settled among us from attending school, is the fact that their imperfect use or pronunciation of our language, and, perhaps, in many cases their comparatively poor, and, it may be, uncouth dress, expose them to ridicule and derision from the thoughtless whom they meet in the school-house. And a competent knowledge of human nature might lead us to conclude that there is much truth in the suggestion. It could not, of course, be expected but that children would be reluctant to encounter such treatment, and that parents would be equally reluctant to expose them to it. Parents and teachers should, therefore, be vigilant and earnest to prevent any such expression of contemptuous feeling by impressing upon those inclined to be guilty of it, a sense of its unkindness, its folly and wickedness.—

The disposition of that class of our population, of whom we are speaking, to send their children to the school, will, beyond all question, depend very much upon the countenance and encouragement given by the community. And, in an especial manner, the teacher should not forget to exert his persuasive influence to bring these children to the place of learning. And when there, —if there be any class of his pupils whom he should meet with, special kindness and encouragement, it is these.

TEACHERS.

The Superintendent having, in his last year's report, commented at some length upon the subject of teachers and their qualifications, will forbear any extended remarks upon this topic at the present time. In relation to this point, however, it should be observed, that the concurrent testimony of County superintendents, is that something has been done by way of securing an improved class of teachers in our schools, so that progress is distinctly marked in this quarter. Yet the conclusion equally unanimous is that much more is still needed to be done.

During the last winter, a circular was issued to County and Town Superintendents recommending to them to adopt the written, instead of the oral mode of examining teachers; and in most cases the mode recommended has been resorted to by County superintendents. And wherever it has thus been resorted to, its greatly superior advantages, as furnishing a more satisfactory and conclusive test of scholarship, have been uniformly recognized. Indeed, it places the reliableness of an examination upon entirely new ground, as well as enables the examiner to gain a knowledge of the attainments of a far greater number when his time is limited. And it not only saves time and renders the examination more conclusive, but also leaves behind an enduring record by which the correctness of the examiner's judgment and decision may itself be tested and determined, should it be called in question. And further, if the proper record be preserved, it will enable us to compare with each other different and distant

classes of teachers, and to determine, from year to year, any advance in their attainments with almost arithmetical exactness.

This mode of examining has brought to light defects not before observed ; or, rather, rendered such defects more apparent and tangible. It has especially developed a great deficiency among teachers in regard to their acquaintance with the elements of orthography, or correct spelling and writing, than was perhaps generally supposed to exist ;—far greater than teachers would have suspected could attach to them as a class. And if this mode of examining be continued and generally practiced by superintendents, teachers will soon discover that they need to study the whole subject of orthography anew.

It is not, of course, intended to imply by these remarks that our teachers, as a class, are not equal, and even superior, to those around them in regard to their attainments, or that any special fault attaches to them in respect to the deficiency adverted to. The fault belongs rather to the times in which they have lived, and to the faulty modes of instruction which have prevailed.

TEACHERS' INSTITUTES.

Of the improvement in the qualifications of teachers which has been effected in the State, no inconsiderable share is due to the establishment among us of Teachers' Institutes. Within the last two years, from one to three sessions have been held in each of seven counties.

These organizations, as constituting, in many cases, the most available means of affording teachers that specific instruction which they so much need, have received universal sanction and approbation wherever they have been established. Teachers who have enjoyed the advantages they afford, have felt that they were precisely adapted to their wants ; and even the first teacher, who has come away from them with any other disposition than to speak earnestly and loudly in commendation of their utility, it is believed, has not yet been heard of.

The mode of conducting these schools for teachers, and the specific ends to be answered by them will not here be set forth, as their general aim and purpose may be assumed to be already understood. It will, at all events, be sufficient to say, that the exercises of a well-conducted Institute, which is assumed to be under the direction of thorough, skillful and experienced teachers, consists in a review of the branches of study usually taught in common schools, with exemplifications of the best modes of teaching them to the different classes of pupils so as to adapt them to their several capacities; lectures on the classification of pupils, the theory of teaching, the best modes of governing schools, of securing order, punctuality and propriety of conduct, interest and diligence in study; and finally, evening lectures of a more general character, designed to enlarge the views of teachers and impress upon them motives to fidelity, and to awaken in the community around a lively and intelligent interest in the cause of education.

We are aware that some have called in question the necessity of any special training to fit one for the employment of teaching. They aver that whatever the teacher has learned he can, of course, impart to others. But this declaration, brief though it be, contains two distinct and palpable errors. In the first place, it contains an error in point of fact. It is not true that all, nor even a large proportion, of those who may have occasion to become teachers, can communicate, with readiness and facility, the knowledge they possess; and they need all the hints they can obtain from others, together with a competent knowledge of the laws of mind, to aid them in the process of stamping upon other minds the impressions made upon their own. There may be a few who have a good degree of native tact for imparting their knowledge, and who could, perhaps, better dispense with foreign aid. But these favored few are *few indeed*. They come far short of the numbers needed to supply our schools. And even the best of them would derive far more advantage from a course of special training than any but close observers would be ready to suppose.

But the other error is a more serious one, involving a false theory of education. It supposes education to consist in a sort

of process of transfusion,—to be a mere business of communicating to the pupil the facts or ideas which the teacher has himself acquired. Doubtless, the imparting of a knowledge of facts is one purpose which the teacher should keep in view. But to suppose that this is the *sole* or even the *leading* purpose that is to guide him is a very great mistake. So far as intellectual education is concerned, aiding or guiding the pupil in the process of acquiring knowledge for himself, and preparing him to make still further acquisitions, unaided, would better express the business and purpose of correct instruction.

Mr. Hudson, whose investigations pertaining to the philosophy of education, are not less profound than his criticisms upon Shakspeare, however much more attention the latter may have attracted,—says of the teacher, that “he becomes the instructor “of his pupils not so much by virtue of what he says and does, “as by virtue of what he is. He is not to use himself as an “instrument to impart what he knows, but to use what he knows “as an instrument to impart himself.” And in order to fulfill this purpose usefully and well, does he not need something more than a knowledge of Arithmetic, Geography and Grammar? Does he not need all that acquaintance with the laws and operations of mind,—not simply of mind matured, but of mind developing,—which he can draw from every available source of knowledge? Does he not, in short, need all the fitness which a special training can secure? And we may here be pardoned the further incidental suggestion, that if the teacher is to be thus reproduced in the pupil,—his mind in the pupil’s mind, and his heart in the pupil’s heart,—how important is it that he should be a fair specimen of humanity, and have received the highest possible culture?

But not to digress, nor to enter at length into a discussion of the necessity of a special preparation for a trust so important as the teacher’s, it may be stated that those who doubt such necessity are not found among reflecting and observing men, and especially, not among teachers themselves. Certain it is, they are not among such as we should judge capable of understanding and appreciating their own deficiencies, difficulties and wants. And, fortified by such authority, the Superintendent will

content himself with the simple expression of his own full conviction, that a knowledge, however thorough, of the branches of study to be taught, would by no means, of necessity, constitute the successful and useful teacher; and that a special preparation is indispensably necessary for him who is to engage in the delicate, difficult and responsible employment of teaching, if he would become "a workman that needeth not to be ashamed."

It appears to the Superintendent exceedingly desirable that Teachers' Institutes should be brought within reach and access of every teacher in the State; and some suggestions in regard to a provision for their general introduction and establishment will be presented under another head.

TEACHERS' WAGES.

An encouragement is held out to teachers to labor on and aim at a yet better preparation for the duties of their employment, in the fact that the importance and value of services, such as they perform, seem to be better appreciated. We find the evidence of this in a gradual but steady advancement of the rates of compensation for the last three years. The returns for the last year, as embraced in the head of "Districts," give \$13,12 as the average wages per month paid to male teachers, and \$5,26 as the average paid to females. The year previous, the rates were \$12,42 and \$5,06; and for the year still preceding, \$11,72 and \$4,75.

These, it will be understood, are the average rates paid for the year. But females employed in winter schools receive higher wages than those employed in the summer. Those engaged in schools, the last winter, received an average compensation of \$7,20 per month. But on the other hand, as one third of the winter schools were taught by females, it will appear from a simple process of calculation that the average wages, paid to those engaged in the summer schools, did not exceed \$4,62 per month.

If, however, there has been an improvement in this particular, it is believed, nevertheless, that the present compensation to

teachers is still an inadequate one. That it is not what the interest of the State requires it should be, is sufficiently proved by the fact that, even in connection with the high moral motives which the employment holds out to allure to it the benevolent and self-sacrificing, it still entirely fails to secure that permanency in the business of teaching which is, confessedly, much to be desired. The sacrifice demanded is too great. We have no reason to expect, and much less have we a right to demand, that any class of the community should devote themselves, for life, to an anxious, and yet uncompensating, employment—one which would not secure a provision for their earthly wants—even for the noble end of doing good. For if we would share in the enjoyment of a good to be gained, why *ought* we not, and why should we not be *willing*, to share in the toil, or in the burden to be borne, assume what shape it may? Let those who would advocate a different rule of action,—a principle of yet more self-sacrificing beneficence,—commend it by their own example in their own field of labor.

The basis, on which the best welfare of society requires that the employment of teaching should be placed, probably, is not that it should be made so lucrative as to compete successfully with other profitable business pursuits in the inducements it should hold out to him whose absorbing idea was the accumulation of wealth. Teachers should not be tempted to look altogether to the pecuniary compensation for their recompense. They should have due reference to the sacredness of the duties, and the weight of the responsibilities, which they assume, and regard that respect from the great and the good to which the faithful discharge of those duties and responsibilities should entitle them, as constituting no small portion of their reward. We would have the employment placed on such ground as should save it from being desecrated, as it would be by making the teacher's services simply a commercial commodity,—a mere matter of stock in trade. Yet, on the other hand, the compensation should be such as would be adequate for those who indulge no eager craving after wealth;—should be such as to involve no serious sacrifice in preparing for and following the employment, in comparison with entering upon other pursuits.

These conditions are compatible with each other, and the true interest of our schools demands that both alike be preserved. And that interest can be secured under no other arrangement. For while there are many who would rejoice, while they are providing for their own necessities, to be also doing good to others, we may not expect to find a class who, in doing good to others, will be willing to starve *themselves*. And, therefore, if we would have the duties of the teacher's office performed ably and well, while we would encourage no one to approach them whose predominant purpose is to gather gold, we must yet regard the laborer in this field to be as worthy of his hire as he who toils in any other. And palpably, that hire should be sufficient to furnish a competent support to him who would devote his days to an employment so useful.

There is little doubt that such *wages* as we *pay*, will continue to secure us such *teachers* as we *have*. But we want *better* ones. We would see entering upon the work of training the youth of our land, true-hearted young men and women, who, encouraged by the hope of being adequately repaid, shall have availed themselves of every means at their command for securing a preparation to perform their work worthily and well.

But in regard to the object of ensuring better rates of compensation, it should be understood that teachers themselves have something to do, as well as the people who employ them. They must make it their aim, in the first place, to *deserve* better pay. They must seek to acquire better qualifications, trusting that if better *qualified* they will be better *paid*. In truth, both parties should be trustful,—neither waiting for the other. But by no means should the teacher be behind-hand in his confidence, or in the efforts which that confidence should excite him to put forth in the work of self-improvement.

THE SCHOOL JOURNAL.

This periodical, published in connection with an Agricultural paper, under the title of "The School Journal and Vermont Agriculturist," deserves to be mentioned among the instrumentalities which have been put in operation, in the State, for promoting the

interests of our common schools. Its circulation for the present year, though by no means equal in different parts of the state, is, nevertheless, respectable ; and, it is believed, that its influence has been felt.

The amount of matter contained in this paper is large in view of the price for which it is afforded,—a price so low that the publishers would scarcely have felt themselves safe in publishing, without personal pledges that they should be sustained, or, at least, saved from serious loss. Yet, considering the large amount of interesting educational literature to which it seems desirable that the public should have access, but which they cannot well obtain from any other source, it would be a valuable purpose accomplished, if a paper, containing a larger amount of educational matter, could be sustained. But should no indications be afforded that such an enterprise would be successful, the Journal will probably continue to be issued in the present form and connection,—at least if it shall receive that support which the friends of Education are bound to afford it. The cause of educational improvement, it is believed, would suffer a serious loss if it were discontinued ; for the teacher needs it as an auxiliary and a guide, and every family should have it, to serve as a monitor in regard to their duties pertaining to the school.

The people of Vermont **MUST NOT** let it languish. Will they not enable it to take higher and broader ground ?

EXPENDITURE OF SCHOOL MONEY.

The Superintendent is, by law, required to report upon this subject. And it would prove an abundantly fruitful theme of remark, were he to present under this head, as connected with the subject of expenditure, the loss sustained by the State, from year to year, though the employment of incompetent teachers ; the occupancy of school-houses adapted neither to comfort, health, nor successful study ; the inadequate provisions for suitable books and proper apparatus ; the want of regularity and punctuality in the attendance upon our schools ; and other neglect or mismanagement inconsistent with an enlightened and

sound economy. But the remarks under this head will be limited to an exposition of the amount expended for the support of schools, without reference to any error or defect in the mode of expending it.

From the returns received through the medium of Town Clerks, it appears that the amount paid to teachers, the last school year, was not far from \$130,000. This varies but little from the estimate given two years since. The statement may appear inconsistent with one previously made, that the rate of wages had increased within that time, and that there had also been a small increase in the average length of schools. But it appears that these occasions of increased expenditure have been compensated by the more extensive employment of female teachers, and by the reduction which has taken place in the number of school-districts. The accomplishment of these objects seems to have saved the State, during the year, for more beneficial application in other quarters, a sum equal to 12 per cent. of the whole amount expended, or about \$15,000. This statement will, perhaps, be received with some distrust, and the Superintendent himself would have distrusted it, had he not examined the matter with some care. If there be room for any error in regard to it, it is in the expenditure of 1845-6 having been over-estimated,—as the returns were not complete. But independent of any reliance upon the estimate then made, the Superintendent has full evidence that at least \$10,000 has been saved in the manner suggested.

The expense to districts for board and fuel is, so far as the returns embrace these items, generally put down at an average equal to about 75 per cent. of the amount paid for teachers' wages. This would make the annual expense of our schools for these three items, about \$225,000.

Of the amount paid for teachers' wages, it appears that about 65 per cent. or \$85,000, is derived from the public funds of the several towns; and the balance, \$45,000, is raised by district taxes assessed upon the list, or upon the scholar attending school. In a large majority of instances, it is believed, the balance is raised by the former method; and it might be hoped that this would hereafter be universally adapted, as the other method

must ever operate to discourage attendance,—especially on the part of children of the poor.

The average expense for tuition of each pupil attending the district school both summer and winter, or for a term of twenty-five weeks, would have been \$1,60, supposing the number thus attending to have been equal to the aggregate number that attended the winter school. In other words, the sum of \$1,60 for each pupil that attended the winter school would cover the expense of teachers' wages for the year. Or if this expense were divided equally among the whole number of children of school age, instead of those who actually attended school, it would amount to a fraction less than \$1,35 for each.

MEASURES FOR IMPROVING THE SCHOOLS.

Under this head, the Superintendent has to report a plan which he believes will be at least ultimately effective in securing that "better organization and instruction of the common schools," which the law recognizes as a something to be desired, and which the Superintendent is required to report plans for effecting. And so strong is his confidence that the plan to be suggested will prove successful, if fully and fairly carried out, that he does not, at present, feel called upon to inquire or look beyond it.

The mode by which it is proposed to improve the common schools in regard to their "organization and instruction," is through the medium of *improved teachers*. Let us first secure well trained and thoroughly qualified teachers, and we have no fears but that a marked improvement will soon exhibit itself in the whole aspect and condition of our schools.

It is not, however, from this view to be concluded that no other purposes need to be accomplished, either directly or indirectly, beyond simply improving the teacher in order to render the school what it should be. There are many other favorable conditions to be secured before improved qualifications in the teacher can fully exert their benign influence. But while the well-trained teacher can accomplish much in spite of the adverse

influences that may surround him to obstruct his plans and impair his usefulness, little or nothing can be effected by the concurrence of all other favorable conditions, so long as the teacher is incompetent. Measures, therefore, for elevating and improving our teachers, we would make the point on which our energies and efforts should be mainly concentrated.

When an enemy's country is to be invaded for the purpose of subjugating it, it is always an object of primary attention to obtain possession of their principal strong holds and most commanding passes. It might indeed facilitate and hasten the final conquest, if the invader could, as he proceeded, take and garrison every subordinate post. But, unless his forces are numerous as those which composed the conquering host of Alexander,—able to carry universal desolation and conquest as they moved along,—he must husband his resources, and dispose of his men and means in the most available manner—securing first those positions only which furnish the most effective base of operations, or which are necessary to keep open his line of communication.

What this occupation of principal posts does towards ensuring success in a military enterprize, that the occupancy of points from which an influence can be most successfully exerted upon teachers will do for an undertaking that has, for its object, the extension and diffusion of the blessings of education over the strongly fortified domains of ignorance and vice. From such a position, efforts may be put forth that will be likely to give us, in the event, the command of every intrenchment of which we would gain possession, and secure the reduction of every fortress that we would see dismantled. The position is one that bears the same relation to the successful advancement of an educational enterprize that the rock of Gibraltar does to the command of the Mediterranean, or the castle of Vera Cruz and the heights of Cerro Gordo to the control of Mexico.

It may be,—it doubtless is,—desirable that other positions of influence should be occupied. We might desire that every school should be frequently visited by one competent at once to advise and aid the teacher in the midst of his labors, and to cheer and stimulate his pupils. We could wish that lecturers,

inspired with the true spirit of their theme, might visit every neighborhood and at once arouse every citizen to a sense of his responsibility and interest in relation to this subject. We should rejoice to see vigorous measures in operation to bring about the prevalence of a more liberal and correct taste in regard to school-house architecture, through which every school-district in the state should ere long be furnished with a pleasantly located and properly constructed school-house,—fit to be regarded as a temple of science and calculated to make science itself both attainable and attractive. And then our rejoicing in this direction might find its crowning occasion of exultation and gladness in the adoption of measures for supplying each of these structures with a well-selected library, and such apparatus and other facilities for successful instruction as the welfare of our children now earnestly and imploringly demands.

But we must assume that our means are limited. We cannot at once expect to see exhibited, in appropriate effort one half that feeling and solicitude in behalf of our schools which they ought to awaken. For practical purposes, we must conclude that those desirable ends, which have been specified, cannot all be compassed and attained at once ; although we may regard them as points which are, in the event, to be successively gained. And granting that every inviting and promising field of labor cannot now be fully and effectually occupied, we must give such direction to our efforts as will secure the greatest possible furtherance of our main enterprize. And it is confidently believed that there is no other centre of movement and action from which our efforts and operations will so effectually advance the cause we seek to promote, as that which has been suggested. Let us act effectively upon the mind and soul, the head and heart of the teacher, and it must, in the end, as certainly and effectually gain us the field to be won as did the victory achieved upon the plains of Abraham secure to the crown of England the possession of the provinces on our Northern border. From the accomplished teacher, beneficial influence will go forth in every direction. And although the progress of the work may not be so rapid as if other and additional agencies were employed at the same time, yet final success

might be regarded as certain, because we might expect that the measure contemplated would gradually and finally secure the application of all other means necessary to insure success.

It is not, however, to be inferred from these remarks that it is proposed to relax any effort that has been put forth, in any direction, for advancing the interests of our common schools. On the contrary, every such effort should be vigorously sustained ;—if possible, redoubled. The purpose is simply to propose the direction which should be given to new aggressive movements.

And now having stated what are the direct agencies or means through which it is proposed to secure the “better organization and instruction” of our schools, it remains to show by what process they are to be called forth and put in effective operation. The practical question, in short, is :—How is a corps of thorough and whole-hearted teachers to be trained and brought into the field? How can we prepare them and send them forth on their mission of beneficence,—scattering blessings around them “like a shower of gold”?

Doubtless, every member of society has individual and personal duties to perform by way of aiding in the attainment of an end so much to be desired. The teacher must first be elevated to his proper social position,—to that respectability which the responsibility of his duties entitles him to enjoy. He must receive from society all the encouragement, in whatever form, which may be necessary to urge him to the attainment of noble ends. But it is the people’s legislators,—the State in its political capacity,—that the Superintendent is more especially required to address. And while individuals in their private positions have duties in relation to our common schools which they cannot transfer, so also has the State its own appropriate sphere of duty and action in relation to them. That sphere embraces the purposes of giving them countenance and encouragement ; of so legislating as to secure on the part of individuals and minor corporations the necessary concert of action ; and of making such pecuniary provisions and appropriations for them as may be essential to their success. Such provision the State has, to some extent, already made. But whether further aid is not now demanded, or whether some part of the present annual

expenditure for their benefit could not be more advantageously directed into some different channel, is an inquiry worthy of attentive consideration. Be the mode, however, what it may by which the end shall be gained, it is believed, in view of the suggestions which have been made, that the State could, at present, do its schools no better or more acceptable service than that of making an appropriation for the benefit of Teachers' Institutes.

Teachers' Institutes have been established, in many other states, and legislative appropriations been made to encourage and sustain them. The pecuniary assistance needed is for the purpose of procuring competent instructors. So far as these institutions have been in operation in this State, this expense has been borne mainly by a few intelligent and beneficent friends of education. It is scarcely to be expected that teachers, while their wages are so low, will be prepared to incur any great expense in attending these schools, beyond that necessarily incurred for board;—and especially so while they remain ignorant of their value.

An appropriation for a limited period,—we would suggest the term of three years,—of the sum of seventy-five cents for each pupil who should attend for the full term of two weeks, it is believed, would remove the difficulties now in the way of the general introduction of these schools into the several counties of the State. And when once they have been introduced, and teachers have learned their true value,—have discovered what important aid they can furnish them in the proper discharge of their duties, and how much they are calculated to cheer them on their toilsome way, it is confidently believed they will then be self-sustaining institutions.

The actual amount required to meet such an appropriation cannot, of course, be definitely estimated. We might, however, presume that the number of pupils attending would average from 50 to 100 for each Institute. And if one were established in each county, the sum required to meet the appropriation, taking the medium of the supposed attendance, would be a little short of \$800;—a sum considerably less than half the amount appropriated for the benefit of Agricultural Societies. We apprehend,

however, that this sum is larger than would be called for during the *first* year; but we should trust less than would be required for the last. For, if such were the result, it might be regarded as an omen for good,—a token of the successful operation of the measure, and a guarantee that it was accomplishing its intended purpose. Let us be assured that at least 1000 teachers in the State enjoy annually the advantages of the Institute, and our hearts might leap for joy.

Such limitations might be attached to the proposed appropriation by way of restricting the amount to a county to a certain maximum, as might be thought expedient.

MODIFICATIONS OF OUR SCHOOL SYSTEM.

Under this head, and in close connection with the subject of an appropriation for Teachers' Institutes, the Superintendent would suggest a modification of our present system of supervision which he would recommend, at least if necessary to ensure the adoption of the measure which has just been urged. This modification proposes a transfer of the duties, now imposed on County Superintendents, pertaining to the visitation of schools, to Town Superintendents alone.

The indispensable importance of sustaining our County Superintendency, at least for the present, as a means of keeping up the standard of qualification for teachers, have been dwelt upon in a former report, and need not be discussed at this time. It is enough to say that if the examination of teachers were now left exclusively to Town Superintendents, it would, in some towns be so totally neglected, or what is no better, be made so purely a matter of form, that the more faithful and earnest measures of other towns would be essentially thwarted, and, as a means of securing an improved class of teachers, it might as well be abandoned, and all hope of improving our schools be abandoned with it.

Our County Superintendents are also needed for the purpose of providing for Teachers' Institutes and assisting in their in-

struction. No other agents in our school system could be depended upon to perform these duties ; nor could private individuals be expected to assume the responsibilities involved in them.

But the services of County Superintendents, by way of visiting schools, are less imperiously demanded, and might be dispensed with, with less serious disadvantage. Their labors, in this relation, have been extended over so wide a field as to be less effective than more concentrated effort would be. Their compensation has scarcely allowed them, in addition to other and more urgent duties, to visit all the schools in their respective counties even once in a year. And it is obvious that this could not accomplish the purpose of a thorough system of visitation and examination of schools. The conclusion then might be that their labors should be either more or less. We should, however, feel reluctant to have this class of services dispensed with, and would not propose the measure here contemplated without urging the more full and thorough performance of the labor by other hands.

In leaving the entire performance of the duty of visiting schools to Town Superintendents, it is true, the work, may for a time, in many towns, be either entirely neglected or very inadequately performed. But this evil must, perhaps, be endured until such delinquent towns, in view of the beneficent examples set and the beneficial results attained by other towns more active and faithful than themselves, shall be induced to exert themselves to secure the same benefits. And if, as is probably the fact, we are eventually to depend upon Town Superintendents to perform not only this, but other labors now devolving upon County Superintendents, it seems desirable that they should now be in a process of preparation for their higher and more extended duties.

If County Superintendents were released from the duty of visiting schools, their compensation might be reduced from the present maximum of ten dollars per town, to six or seven. This sum would cover the expense of attending examinations, every spring and fall, in so many of the towns in their respective counties as might be necessary for the adequate accommodation

of teachers, and also provide for their labor pertaining to Institutes. The reduction of compensation would in the meanwhile be equivalent to the amount proposed to be appropriated for the support of these Institutes.

Another modification of our school law which the Superintendent feels himself called upon to propose and recommend, is to make our common schools, in all cases, *wholly free*. The balance required for the support of schools, after the application of public funds, is now, indeed, raised, in a large majority of cases, by a tax assessed upon the list of the district, so that, practically, ours is in the main a free-school system. And it is not so much the few occasional exceptions to this result that indicate a change to be desirable, as other considerations. That these exceptions operate as an evil, to some extent, by deterring the poor from sending their children to school, and thus swelling the number of those who, as we have already seen, fail to avail themselves of the means of education is not to be doubted. But yet greater evils, growing out of the present system, spring up in other quarters.

In the first place, the law, as it now stands, seems to recognize as truth a very erroneous doctrine. By giving to districts the right to support their schools by a tax assessed upon the scholars sent, (after applying public funds,)—no matter how seldom districts avail themselves of the permission,—the law implies that education is to be regarded rather as an exclusive interest of the individual, than as a common interest which the public owes it to its own welfare to provide for,—each individual contributing according to his wealth and ability.

The doctrine that the State is interested and bound to furnish to all a competent common-school education, and that the wealth of society should make the necessary provision for it, cannot be discussed here because the argument would lead us over too wide a field. But we will present a thought upon this topic in the ever-glowing and graphic language of Mr. Mann. “Does any possessor of wealth, or leisure, or learning, ask, ‘What interest have I in the education of the multitude?’ I reply; you have at least this interest, that, unless their minds are enlightened by knowledge, and controlled by virtuous principles, there is

“not, between their appetites and all you hold dear upon earth, so much as the defence of a spider’s web. Without a sense of the inviolability of property, your deeds are but waste paper. Without a sense of the sacredness of person and life, you are only a watch-dog, whose baying is to be silenced that your house may be more securely entered and plundered. Even a guilty few can destroy the peace of the virtuous many. One incendiary can burn faster than a thousand workmen can build; and this is as true of social rights as of material edifices.” And again: “The parent, who wishes to bring up his own children well but refuses to do all in his power to perfect the common educational institutions around him, should go with his family into voluntary exile,—he should fly to some Juan Fernandez, where no contagion of others’ vices can invade his solitude and defeat his care.”

It is, doubtless, true that the first and immediate positive benefits of an education may enure more especially to him who receives it. But what may be termed its negative advantages, derived from its influence in preserving from the commission of offences against property and person, are, without doubt, shared most largely by society, so far at least as regards this world. And even the positive benefits of proper educational culture are gradually imparted to the community around, and in an ever widening and extending circle, until at length all advantages of personal proprietorship are lost and mingled in a diffusive and common good. And even when the subject of such culture dies, the good which it has fitted him to do and the blessings it has enabled him to scatter die not with him, but remain the inheritance of another generation.

The Superintendent, however, is not so much disposed to present it as the duty and privilege of the State to provide for all a competent education, in view of the great and positive benefits to be secured; as to contend for it as a right—a right incident to humanity in any and every condition—the right of self-preservation. As a body of people united under a civil and social organization,—may we adopt the most effective measures,—or rather the *only adequate* measures, to secure ourselves against those outrages and injuries to which we are ever exposed among those

who have grown up uneducated and unrestrained, ignorant and depraved? Are we at liberty to guard ourselves against fraud and violence and wrong? May we claim—not the miserable permission to punish crime when committed, and to guard ourselves from danger only to the poor extent that the terror of the law can do it—but the substantial privilege of preventing crime, by a timely provision for the intellectual and moral education of those who, year by year, are coming forward to mingle in the society in which our fortunes are cast? If this privilege be denied, there is no alternative left but that we must wait until these future spoilers of our peace shall have attained to the full maturity of depravity and malignity and are ready to come forth with the firebrand and the dagger. Nay more, we must wait until the blow has been struck or the torch been applied,—and then the poor mockery of a boon is allowed us, to invoke the arm of the law,—potent, indeed, to punish, yet powerless save in that late hour when its interposition is unavailing, since it cannot bring back the breath that has gone, nor even restore the dwelling that lies smouldering in its ruins!

How much more economical it is to provide schools to educate, than to support tribunals to convict, and penitentiaries to punish,—and, perchance, hangmen to execute,—is a consideration that cannot here be dwelt upon.

But not to comment farther upon the principles involved in the free-school system, there is a direct evil, appreciable to all and of no small magnitude, growing out of our law as it now stands. The fact that the district, at every school-meeting, has to determine the mode of raising the sum necessary after applying public moneys, leads in many cases to debate and strife, and does more than all other agencies to produce that alienation of feeling, and that want of harmony of action, which are so fatal to the welfare of the school. For although the district may almost uniformly settle the question in favor of a tax upon property, yet the contest is ordinarily renewed on the return of each succeeding spring and autumn; and with it are revived former discords and animosities, as yet scarcely half smothered. The question, indeed, seems to serve as a bone of contention that never wears away. And the reason why school-district wrangling has not become proverbial can only be

explained by the fact that the occasions for its exhibition occur but two or three times in a year;—though the mischiefs, growing out of it, last the whole year round.

The evil is that the law leaves the question an open one. For it is believed that many who now, on the occasions adverted to, oppose the plan of supporting the school by a tax upon property, would yet not be dissatisfied with a law making this mode, in all cases, imperative. Individuals would yield gracefully and with undisturbed serenity of temper to the “authority of the State of Vermont,” while they would not so quietly submit to what they might term the ungracious demands of their neighbors.

It is no new experiment that it is proposed to try in Vermont. The plan of supporting schools without any tax dependent on attendance has been successfully adopted elsewhere. Mr. Mann says, that if the people of Massachusetts have any innate ideas, free schools are among them. No other system was ever known there. Other states, also, have adopted the same system. Indiana, a few weeks since, by popular vote decided in favor of it by a triumphant majority.

But we need not look abroad to determine the propriety of the measure in question. We have only to look carefully around us, and we shall soon gain conclusive evidence that the measure is demanded by a proper regard not merely for the best interest of our schools, but for our own personal security and welfare.

GENERAL AND CONCLUDING REMARKS.

To perfect the system of education for a community,—to aim at steadily and unceasingly enlarging its means and increasing its power to elevate, improve and bless, must ever be the purpose of the enlightened patriot whose eye can take in the breadth and extent of human interests, and discern the relation which education bears to them all. He will see that the foundations of a people's prosperity and happiness can, in no other way, be laid deep and broad and sure.

How much, precisely, might be accomplished for the welfare

of the human race by a thorough system of education, reaching and embracing all, such a system as we might attain to without exhausting or tiring human industry in the work of improvement,—we do not know, because the experience of the world has not yet solved the problem. But still, through the light that shines on us from the past, we may catch a glimpse of the benefits which a common-school system, thoroughly matured and vigorously sustained, would have power to confer. No one can doubt that our New England common schools have essentially secured to us, so far as any human agency or instrumentality has been concerned, our highly favored lot. Yet how far are we beneath that condition to which an extension of this system, and such improvements in its application as are clearly practicable, might enable us to rise.

Probably, our pilgrim fathers, while projecting that system of common schools which it has been the glory and the happiness of New England to enjoy, had but little idea how vast a superstructure of national prosperity might rise and rest upon the foundation they proposed to lay. The real magnitude of their work could not have broken upon their vision. Through that light which Luther kindled amidst that gloom darker and drearier than the sepulchre's which had, for centuries, enshrouded the moral world, they had caught from the Bible the idea of religious liberty. And having transported to this Western world themselves, their fortunes and their hopes, they sought to establish, on this virgin continent, such institutions as would secure and preserve to them and their posterity, that "freedom to worship God" as conscience might dictate which they believed to be their legitimate birth-right. And rightly did they deem that general intelligence, in connection with a Christian education, would prove its surest safeguard. But they could not have even dimly foreseen that upon this foundation would rise that glorious temple of civil as well as religious liberty beneath whose ample dome a nation dwells in security, and in the enjoyment of the richest privileges and blessings that ever fell to a nation's lot. It needed the result of their measures to demonstrate, so far as it has yet been actually demonstrated, what the common school could do.

But the capabilities and powers of this instrumentality in pro-

moting the welfare and happiness of man have not, as already hinted, yet been put to their fullest test. The scale is a long one, that marks the vast variety of grades, both actual and possible, in human character and condition, as influenced by educational culture. Neither of its extremes can be brought clearly and distinctly within our view. While one is lost in the darkness and degradation of benighted barbarism,—in those lowest depths in which untaught and uncultivated humanity can grope and grovel,—the other rises upward and onward into a world unseen. It reaches into those higher and purer regions of intellectual and moral culture to which we may have imagined humanity could but aspire in vain. But who shall presume to tell the heights which the soul by proper culture may not, even in this world, transcend?—Our aim, however, should be to first compass and attain that,—and that only,—which is clearly, palpably and directly within our reach. And we may safely leave it to advanced attainments to inspire the purpose and devise the way of reaching that remoter and richer good which some may regard as but a charming dream.

It may, however, be supposed that the power of education in any case to improve the condition of society, and especially to relieve it from those moral wrongs which, even under the most favored circumstances, now disturb its peace and mar its felicity, is overestimated. It is conceded that mere intellectual education is inadequate to the accomplishment of the purposes in view. Still, this much may be safely affirmed, that knowledge has no tendency to pervert the conscience or weaken its restraining power.—On the contrary, an enlightened understanding, by disclosing the perils and pains, more or less remote, incident to every deviation from the path of rectitude, must, so far as it operates at all, operate to dissuade from that vicious practice which gradually impairs the energy, and stills the voice of that “monitor in the human breast.” Besides, the cultivation of the intellect, by its general tendency to elevate the views and purposes, and to awaken a feeling of self-respect and regard for reputation, will ever be likely to contribute, more or less, to the formation of virtuous principles and habits.

Be this, however, as it may,—that is no true education which

does not have regard to *all* the elements of humanity, and aim to develop and cultivate them in harmonious and just proportions. It is a defective, and we might add, a dangerous education, that looks only to mental culture, while the moral nature is forgotten and neglected. And it is under this view of the subject that the necessity of improving our system of education becomes most apparent.

But that a proper education can do those who receive it some good, none will have the hardihood to deny. And let us conclude, what we will, in regard to the extent of perfection to which an educational system can be carried, or the amount of good that it can be made to accomplish, we shall all agree that our children must, in general terms, be educated. Thus far we cannot be skeptical in our belief,—at least none will dare avow a skepticism,—however loose we may be in our practice. And concurring, as all will, in the truth and correctness of the proposition as stated, the great question then is,—shall the education we propose be the work of *system* or of *chance*? Shall it be under a watchful guardianship and care, and the work be performed methodically, thoroughly and surely; or shall it be done casually, loosely and negligently,—with the necessary liability that it shall prove a total and disastrous failure?

Confessedly important as is the work, we are far too much in the habit of hoping against all reasonable probability in regard to it and trusting that it will be done "*somehow*" so as to "answer the purpose,"—instead of providing a plan or system that shall secure certainty and the highest possible perfection. Legislators, perhaps, ease their consciences in a neglect to make the necessary provision for the interests of education, by the trust that these interests will be "taken care of *somehow*" by the districts, or the people in their personal capacity. These in turn, shaping their conduct after those eminent models, though, perhaps, feeling even less responsibility in the cause than their legislators, hope that the matter will "*somehow* be kept straight" by the school committees. And these functionaries, sending on the sacred obligations thus converted to a foot-ball, do just as they might be expected to do for such indifferent employers, and entrust the whole work, with all its vast and unthought of responsibilities, to

a teacher of whose qualifications they know little or nothing, and for whose fidelity,—be his knowledge what it may,—they have no guarantee save this over-trusting yet ever deceived and deceiving hope that all will *somehow* “come out right at last.”

We cannot trace results further; but who will deny that we have given a truthful, though imperfect, sketch of the history of our schools in years gone by? And have those years ALL passed?

We do not trust to this loose mode of procedure in regard to our palpable material interests, because the failures and disasters resulting from it would press themselves too forcibly upon our attention, and too loudly and severely rebuke our negligence. When the farmer has cast his seed into the earth, he does not leave his field unfenced, in the loose hope that *somehow* the cattle that roam the highways will pass it by, and leave his crop unharmed. Nor does he neglect to visit it with the cultivator and the hoe in the vain trust that his land is not weedy, and that *somehow* he shall get a fair harvest without further attention. Nor does he overlook the necessity of adopting measures to maintain the productiveness of his lands, in the vague and idle hope that some favoring winds of heaven may scatter over them the materials necessary to secure and sustain their full fertility. The folly of a trustfulness, like this, would soon be impressed by hunger and cold and general destitution. And the poverty and suffering, consequent on such a system of husbandry, would follow *so closely* that there would be no difficulty in tracing them to their true source.

And so in all the ordinary business of life, we are careful to adjust means to ends, and to see that they are maintained in efficient operation; because, this trusting to vague, uncertain and indefinite contingencies would be likely, at no distant period, to receive an appropriate and appreciable rebuke.

And why is it that, in regard to the work of education, we act upon those loose and careless principles that have been described? Doubtless, one reason is that the operations of mind are not palpable to the touch nor visible to the eye. The laws, which govern the relation of cause and effect in the process of education, are not, therefore, so distinctly traced. And hence,

when unfavorable results follow our misconduct or neglect, we manage to make peace with ourselves by ascribing the mischief to some other than its true cause.

And again in the work of education, appreciable effects are not so speedily produced as in the cultivation of the soil. A single season suffices to bring the field-crops to maturity and demonstrate the efficiency of our culture, or to exhibit the consequences of our neglect. But, in the work of developing the mind and moulding the moral character, years must elapse before we can fully determine what is to be the fruit of our labor. In fulness and distinctness of results, a generation in the *one* case, is but equivalent to a season in the *other*. And, because from the narrowness of our limited experience, we cannot clearly see that effects, though slow in the one case, are yet equally certain as in the other, we are prepared,—if not to deny the existence of laws governing the process of education,—yet to indulge a practical skepticism, in regard to them, by disregarding their plain and obvious demands.

As a matter of broad experience, the results, wrought out by a chance education, are precisely such as we should expect to attain in every other department of human interest under a similar method of management. To a comprehensive and close observation it turns out too clearly to admit of denial or doubt, that the evil consequences of neglect are none the less certain and disastrous, merely because they do not at once tangibly and forcibly obtrude themselves upon our view. They may never pass before our eyes. Indeed, the evil may not be fully developed, in its most appalling form and features, until after we shall have lost all semblance of human organization under the decomposing power of the grave.

The opinion is confidently entertained by intelligent and observing citizens of the State, whose opportunities for judging in the premises have been peculiarly favorable, that as one result of past neglect already apparent, the common mind of Vermont has palpably depreciated within the last thirty years. The Superintendent feels reluctant to avow this as his belief, but he has to say that he is compelled to fear that it is true. It would be too painful to admit in distinct terms, that the state had degener-

ated in its character, that its intelligence had sunk, and that its mind was, perchance, still tending downward. Rather should we be prompted to withhold so unpleasant a truth, by a feeling akin to that of the French financier who justified himself for having greatly over-estimated the wealth of the nation, by saying that "one could never do too much for his country." But let the inquiry be presented for discerning and thoughtful men to ponder upon, whether they should feel constrained to withhold the answer or not;—Has not the intellect of the State lost something of its former vigor? The generation now coming forward may know as many facts as the generation they are displacing: but do they possess the same strong reasoning powers; the same closeness and accuracy of observation; the same vigorous and manly common-sense?

In regard to hardiness and independence of character, too, is there not visible to the eye of him, who has observed closely and long, a shade of degeneracy? True it is that, independently of systematic educational influence, our situation and circumstances continue to favor, to some extent, the development of these sterling virtues. But is not something more needed to save them from decline? That improved culture, which we desire to secure, is not merely compatible with these virtues, but it would tend at once to preserve them in the fullness of their strength; to bend them to the highest and noblest ends; and to impart to them fresh beauty and brightness.

But whatever answer might be given to the inquiries which have been raised, certain it is that under a continuance of our past neglect of the interests of education, results, such as we have supposed, would not only be visible to those around us, but become so glaring that no veil, which pride could weave, would suffice to hide them from our own reluctant view. Nay more,—results such as these, and others still more deplorable, must and will inevitably follow, if the education of our children be not the object of our most watchful care,—our most earnest and systematic efforts. Let us then have done, and forever, with that over-abounding trustfulness which would leave the work of education to the perils of chance. It is only by uniting action with expectancy,—vigorous effort with the fullness of our confidence,—

that we can avert the melancholy result that the curse of our neglect of duty shall be extending and continuing to operate on the earth when we are lying beneath its bosom.

Our efforts in the cause of education must never be regarded as substantially lost or unpromising merely because they do not, at once and in full, reward our toil. Though a portion of the evils to be averted may be remote, and a part of the good to be gained be not nigh at hand, still a judicious forecast and sound wisdom urge us to labor on with a zeal that neither flags nor tires. It has been remarked, by a recent writer on political economy, that "individuals or races do not differ so much in the efforts they are able and willing to make under strong immediate incentives, as in their capacity of present exertion for a distant object." And this proposition, in its application to all the various departments of human industry and interest, contains a truth of immense magnitude and importance. As a race, the Anglo-Saxons have been regarded as possessing this capacity of toiling for the future in an eminent degree. It is this capacity, as applied to all our economical interests, that ensures to us our general thrift and prosperity as a people. In its plans for advancing these interests, it recognizes that intelligence and skill, as means to a more distant end, are no less necessary than immediate toil.

But if the trait of character, in question, embraced, in the scope of its aims and efforts, no other and higher object than a provision solely for the animal wants,—by whatever process that provision was sought to be secured,—the ant, the squirrel and the beaver might claim to vie with us in sagacity and in prudence. It must have regard to a higher and nobler end than this, if it would lay claim to true wisdom. Our purposes, however, as determined or influenced by motives drawn from the far distant future, do and must have regard, in a greater or less degree, to the wants of our nobler natures.

Upon this point, however, we are, perhaps, in danger of attempting distinctions for which the arrangements of Providence have left no room,—of endeavoring to dis sever that which God has joined. Practically, the highest degree of mere worldly prosperity and enjoyment is most effectually secured through the medium of that generous cultivation of our intellectual and moral

powers, which may, itself, be regarded as an end. Indeed, our true material and our higher interests for this world are so inseparably blended, and are to be secured by a process so identically the same, that any attempt to build up the former, as distinct from the latter, must forever be in vain. And the practical difficulty in the case is, that unless our views be broad enough to embrace this truth, and our prudence be far-reaching enough to follow its indications, we shall never lay our foundations broad enough for our true economical interests, in all their amplitude, to rest upon. To be *truly* wise in reference to the lower objects of human pursuit, we must, in comparative forgetfulness of them, aspire to higher ends. For then we shall find them flowing down to us in their largest abundance through that same channel which conveys to us those yet richer benefits which better deserve to engross our care.

But, in regard to this capacity of acting for the future, in its special relations to the higher objects of human interests, might we not attain to a yet higher degree of excellence than we can claim to have reached? Might we not, especially, by increased attention to the interests of education, exhibit this virtue in fairer form, with credit to our foresight, because with the reasonable expectation of eventually reaping for ourselves and our children a sure and rich reward?

Neither individuals nor communities could desire more exhaustless and ever-flowing fountains of wealth and happiness, or more sure guarantees of solid and enduring prosperity, than are to be found in those skillful hands, clear heads and honest hearts which all correct education aims to secure. Leaving out of view their more obvious and immediate relations to individual well-being, a state would find in them the surest pledge that a patriotic devotion to their country's welfare would ever dwell in the bosom of its citizens. Let those fountains of good, which education opens, be dried up, and religion would degenerate into a mere system of heathenish rites; home would cease to be the pure sanctuary of domestic bliss; and patriotism itself must then grow cold,—because the name of country, no longer associated with the memory of loved institutions, would have no power to bind us to the land that gave us birth. But, on the contrary, let the cause of sound education be advanced, and those more immediate ob-

jects at which it aims be secured,—and life itself rises in interest and value. Industry, intelligently directed, prospers in all its toil; the home, which that industry would beautify and bless, is encircled with fairer charms, and becomes the dwelling-place of purer joys; and religion, languishing not amidst the genial and general glow, diffuses more widely her benign influence, and imparts her higher and richer consolations. And now it is that our country,—the land of our home and all its associated joys,—becomes emphatically and truly “the land we love.”

Thus, all those great interests which are worthy of human concern,—home and country and our hopes for the future,—all rest secure beneath the sheltering care of an enlightened, correct and true system of education. In the comprehensiveness of its scope, it embraces and provides for them all.

And the interests, placed under such guardianship and security, will be always and everywhere safe;—safe amidst those revolutions in which wonted usages are broken up and forms of government are changed; safe amidst falling crowns and crumbling thrones. The element, which education imparts to institutions designed for the advancement of human welfare, is but their animating spirit; and it survives the perishable organizations that may have served to embody it. It can out-live empires and republics,—careless what becomes of the forms it may once have inhabited. For it can and will create new, and, perchance, more perfect forms, into which it may infuse vitality and vigor and the power to bless.

Having then first gained that perfected clearness of vision which a consideration of such truths, as we have been contemplating, is calculated to secure, let us turn our eyes carefully upon that future of which we would not be regardless. And catching a glimpse of those large benefits,—distant it may be, yet certain,—which wait to reward those who have the ability to discern and the wisdom to toil for them; and impressed, as such a view will be likely to impress us, with the folly of that worst improvidence which would leave the soul with its higher wants, its immortal cravings, all unsupplied,—we shall *then* be prepared to judge of the importance of that enterprize which would make the most ample provision possible for securing those benefits which have been revealed to our view, and be ready to settle our plans of personal

and political policy in relation to our system of public instruction. Then,—then shall we be ready to bend our best energies, each to his own appropriate share in the toil incident to the enterprize of extending to every child in the State a good common-school education,—one the most thorough and perfect that our wealth can provide for, our wisdom devise, or our learning and skill impart.

Nor need we look far forward to some indefinite and distant future to gather incentives to action, or to determine what wisdom teaches us. The good we seek is to be shared by ourselves and our children none the less freely because distant generations will share it too. It is for our own and our children's welfare that we are called to *act*; and we have no occasion to look farther, save it be simply to gain brighter hopes and stronger zeal. So far as measures are to be devised, or labor is to be performed, it is enough for us to provide wisely for the generation now pressing forward to take our places;—and, for the fate and destiny of the generations that shall succeed them, we need indulge no anxious solicitude.

And thus limiting our view, we may safely say that, for the next thirty years, the prosperity of the State will depend more upon her educational policy, public and private, than upon all other influences that can affect it. If that policy be narrow, illiberal and unkind,—let us on other matters legislate as we will, and for other interests labor as we may,—the State will be depreciating in all true excellence, and declining in all substantial prosperity. For if the doctrine that “intelligence and moral worth constitute the chief strength and glory of a state and are the foundation of all true prosperity,” ever had special applicability to *any* case, it is preeminently applicable to our own. Our educational policy must, therefore, be comprehensive, liberal and wise; such as shall be calculated to foster those excellencies and develop those virtues on which our prosperity so much depends. We may then trust that Vermont will continue to maintain an honorable position among the States of our republic,—a position of which her sons need never be ashamed.

All which is respectfully submitted.

HORACE EATON,

State Superintendent of Common Schools.

Montpelier, November 6, 1848.

A P P E N D I X .

EXTRACTS FROM REPORTS OF COUNTY SUPERINTENDENTS, ETC.

From Report of Superintendent for Caledonia County.

Since my last Report, I think progress has been made in the good work we are seeking to accomplish, yet the progress is slow and difficult. And so it must be for some time to come. Every advance will be the result of patient and persevering effort, put forth by those who can appreciate the value of the end sought. Notwithstanding all the obstacles in the way, improvement has been made in the schools in this County in several respects. In the first place, there has been an improvement in respect to *School-houses*. Some twelve or more new ones have been erected during the year, and thorough repairs made in others. In regard to some of these houses, great pains have been taken to make them *what they should be*, and several of them do approximate that point at least. And where new school-houses have not been built, there is, in very many cases, a marked improvement in the internal appearance of the old one. There is an air of *neatness* which shows that the *spirit* of improvement is there. They show that a broom has been furnished, and that both the broom and mop are sometimes applied. Shovel and tongs too are oftener found, and the pail and cup, than formerly.

There has been an improvement in the *mode of teaching*.— This is very perceptible to one who has been in the habit of visiting schools for three or four years past. During the last winter and summer, I was really delighted in instances at the change. Recitations, instead of being a dull *memoriter* exercise, a *saying*, or *blundering* over what they had committed, or pretended to commit from the book, were a scene of *interest* to the class and teacher, where the mind was excited, attention fixed and thought called forth.

Our schools are now *visited*, more or less ; and these visits are expected by the teacher and scholars. This, of itself, could hardly fail to produce a beneficial effect upon the school. First, the teacher is examined ; this operates as a powerful stimulus upon teachers generally, to be prepared in the best possible manner. Next, his ability to teach, and manage a school, is examined into by visits at the school-room ; and these, he is aware, are liable to be made at any time ; it becomes him to have his school *always* ready to be visited and examined. And these things, as might be expected, do produce an *effect*, which is palpable. Some of the Town Superintendents have assured me, that the schools have been better, the summer and winter past, than they have ever known the same schools to be before. This remark, of course, is to be taken in a general sense, admitting of individual exceptions. And I feel warranted in saying, that, so far as my own personal observation has extended, the last winter and summer schools, as a whole, were *decidedly* better than I have ever found them before. And the teachers too that I have examined during the year, (near three hundred in all,) have sustained a better examination than in either of the previous years of my office as Superintendent.

There has been an improvement in our schools too in respect to classification and studies. The number of classes is very much reduced, in consequence of a greater uniformity of text-books.— This, of course, gives the teacher more time to devote to each class, and enables him to impart more instruction. Then there are fewer in the higher branches ; this we regard as an improvement. There was a desire on the part of young scholars, encouraged too often by parents and teachers, to attend to the more advanced studies. And this was often done, to the neglect of the more important and elementary branches, a knowledge of which is *essential* to thoroughness of scholarship.

There has been a great improvement in the County in respect to books. There is now a much greater degree of uniformity, besides having books much better adapted to the end designed.

But after all the improvements which have been made, the work is but just begun. Enough has been accomplished to prove the wisdom and importance of the measures adopted, and to warrant the expectation of ultimate success, if those measures are faithfully carried out. That our system is perfect, none will pretend ; all who have closely watched its operation, have doubtless seen points where they have felt it ought to be altered for the better. It must be perfected, as all similar systems are, by watching its practical working, and, by degrees, correcting what is wrong or defective, by applying the hand of wise and sober legislation. Those who have had the best means of watching its

operations and effects, must feel that the system, in its main features, is an excellent one and adapted to the wants of the State. It has not yet made our schools what they should be, nor could its most enthusiastic supporters ever have expected this in so short a time. Under its operation much that was wrong has been brought out to public notice, so that we now see what is needed, and many feel *how greatly needed*. This is much in itself, and promises *much more*.

It is true our system of supervision is attended with expense; but how small a per cent. upon the actual cost of our schools! Probably not over *two or three* per cent., while our schools, during the first three years of its operation, a period when it might be expected it would have most to encounter, have improved, in the estimation of those best qualified to judge, not less than *twenty-five* per cent. Now is not this expenditure, great as it is, the truest economy? I cannot conceive of a way in which the Legislature could appropriate the same amount, or twice the same amount of money, with better hope of realizing a rich return to the State hereafter: a return, not directly in cash, but converted into that in which its *real wealth* consists, and on which its surest prosperity depends, the virtue and intelligence of her citizens. I am sure our legislators will entitle themselves to the lasting gratitude of all good citizens, by perfecting, and carrying out with efficiency, the system they have given us.

From Report of Superintendent for Windsor County.

In regard to the general condition of the schools in this County, I think they are improving as fast as could be expected, under the circumstances. If I do not greatly misjudge, there is a growing interest in the means and efforts for their improvement, on the part of the great mass, and a willingness to aid in this work not heretofore manifested. Evidences of this are to be found in all directions.

But there are many obstacles in the way of improving our schools. One only will I name, and this is one which I apprehend will be more difficult to remove, than any other with which we have to contend. I refer to the multiplicity of exceedingly small school districts—districts which do not contain above fifteen or twenty children of school age. Were this state of things necessary, to its present extent, it might be more endurable, and we could submit to it with a better grace. But when it is, as in a large majority of cases, entirely unnecessary, and the result of inconsiderateness and a foolish fearfulness of having our children

walk more than half a mile in a day, it becomes utterly intolerable.

It seems to me, something more needs to be done, to bring this subject more distinctly before the minds of the great mass of the people, than has yet been attempted. And now is the time to do it; for a very great share of the school-houses are in such a dilapidated condition, that they cannot be used much longer. At this point of time and before new houses are erected, it is important to act and act efficiently. It is just the time most favorable to effecting something in the way of removing the evil. But if this time is permitted to pass unimproved and new school-houses rise in the place of the old, we cannot hope soon to effect any great changes, so very desirable and necessary; for any changes in the territorial limits of districts, would involve, of course, a change in the location of the school-house, and we can hardly expect a people just as they have furnished themselves with a new school-house, to be willing to remove it to a new locality, or abandon it and subject themselves to the expense of building anew. So that what is done in relation to this matter needs to be done now.

As regards public feeling relative to the present system of supervision, I think it is becoming more and more favorable in this County. The law is now very generally observed by the towns, though some districts in most towns disregard it so far as the license of teachers is concerned. This is becoming a serious matter in many of the border towns, and demands the serious attention of our law makers.

In conclusion, I would only add, that I regard the present state and condition of things as decidedly hopeful, and the operation of the present system of supervision, imperfectly as it is carried out, highly favorable in promoting the interests of our Common Schools.

From Report of Superintendent for Grand Isle County.

Last fall and spring I held appointments in each town for the examination of teachers, and generally they were well attended. Those examined gave as good evidence of their qualifications for teaching as could be expected of young men and women in their circumstances. Yet, in many cases, it was far from what it ought to be, and could only be approved because it was the best that could be done. We must use these or be destitute of teachers. I have found some as wise as one, reported last year, who located the Mississippi River in New England. Yet there is evidently

a steady advance in the character of teachers in the County.

But what can be expected from inexperienced youth in practical teaching and school government? Who would think of entrusting such with the care and training of a family? How much more so of many families, of divers habits and dispositions? How shall such immaturity harmonize, control and educate the mass of crude and wayward spirits under their charge?

My predecessor, in his report last year, remarked that "the people appreciate the importance of education." I suppose he meant *comparatively*;—that they are not below many others in their estimate of education. This I have no doubt is true. But do they value it as they should;—as its importance demands? Tea, coffee, snuff, tobacco, silks, satins, and broadcloths must be had. But if a new text-book is wanted,—the old one must do,—or poverty is too pinching to bear the expense. A *good* carpenter, smith, shoemaker or tailor must be employed, but a *cheap* school-teacher. The *horse's foot* must have a *workman*, but the youthful *mind*, the *image* of the *Eternal*, may be put in the charge of a *novice*, if he will but work cheap!

This picture may look dark; but is it over-drawn? Let facts speak. These are so numerous, and stand out so clearly, that they cannot be misunderstood. I think we cannot too highly prize our system of common-school education, or foster it with too tender and anxious care.

From Report of Superintendent for Windham County.

At the usual time in the spring, I commenced my tour through the County, again to examine teachers, in connection with the Town Superintendents. Eighty-seven presented themselves for examination. Sixty-nine of these received full certificates of qualification for teaching school in the County. Eight received certificates with Orthography erased. Five received partial certificates. Two were licensed by Town Superintendents. Three received no certificate. The examination was conducted principally by writing, in accordance with the direction and suggestion of the State Superintendent. This mode of examination is, on the whole, more satisfactory than that formerly adopted. It gives the candidate more time to arrange his thoughts, and to shape his answers. It furnishes a permanent record of the questions put, and answers given, and thus affords the means of comparing one with another, and the qualifications of one year with those of another: and it also furnishes a better opportunity to judge of the qualifications of those examined, and to point out errors and defects in their answers.

I found in this, as in previous examinations, a great deficiency in Orthography, though much improvement had been made since the first examination under the present school law. The following list of words was pronounced to the teachers under examination, to test their skill in Orthography: Besiege, Privilege, Separate, Noticeable, Blamable, Manageable, Producing, Robberies, Donkeys, Marriage, Hoeing, Cabbage, Receive, Believe, District, Certifies. Though these are common and familiar words, yet every one was misspelled. It is, however, but just to say that a large number of the candidates acquitted themselves honorably in this branch.

The plan of examining teachers, principally by writing, is well calculated to show defects that might not otherwise be discovered. For instance, one of the teachers, examined last spring, wrote the name of Daniel Webster commencing with small letters, thus, *daniel webster*.

During the summer past, I have been engaged for several weeks in visiting schools. I have visited more or less in every Town in the County. I have visited seventy-seven in all. Of these I should say that not more than ten were decidedly poor; that a dozen or so might be called middling, and that the rest were, some good, and others excellent, that is, according to our present standard.

Some very glaring defects in teaching were apparent, which might be remedied by a short stay at an Institute.

You will see by the Statistical Report that a few school houses have been erected in the County during the year. These have been constructed on improved plans. They are far more convenient and comfortable than their predecessors. The two now erecting, one in Wilmington, the other in Westminster, are each two stories high, and designed to accommodate two schools each. They are of good size, and will be finished in the best manner of country school houses. The intention of the people of the districts where these school houses are located is, to separate the pupils into two divisions, according to their ages or attainments, and thus give greater efficiency to their schools. The same thing might be done in several other places in the County; and would be, if the people understood their true interests.

From Report of Superintendent for Chittenden County.

I have examined more than one hundred teachers and visited one hundred and sixty schools. Six or seven new school houses, of better construction, have been erected in the County the last

year, and others repaired. Still the vast majority of them are entirely unfit for use. But there is much more interest taken in schools, and more feeling manifested in reference to books, apparatus and houses for the rising race. Teachers are evidently improving; still they are, many of them, deficient. Our Institute, under the care of Mr. Richards, last October, was well attended, and much good resulted from it. A convention of Teachers and Superintendents met a short time since, and decided upon another Institute, which will be held in October at Jericho centre. There were great improvements, and a manifest advance made by many of the Teachers who attended the Institute,—which was visible in the schools that I visited. About sixty attended the last year, and we expect an hundred this year. There is much feeling upon the subject. After all, there is much to be done before our schools are what they should be. Reading is too mechanical, and multitudes of our children seem not to know that the object of reading is to obtain knowledge, or elicit thought. Too little attention is paid to the elements of our language. The Spelling Book is miserably understood by teachers and scholars. There is too little colloquial instruction. Teachers confine themselves to the book-lesson, without those interrogations which awaken thought. Children are suffered to travel over Porter's Reader and Sander's 4th Book without obtaining a distant idea from a whole page. I have almost wished these books had never found their way into our common schools. Some few scholars are benefitted, but many more are taught to hate reading by this means, and for the good reason that they find no interest in what they read.

Yet I am encouraged to believe that there is an improvement, and an advance in all these particulars. I find many more suitable books in our schools this year than last. I find also a larger number of skillful teachers. Thus I am disposed to thank God and take courage.

From Report of Superintendent for Rutland County.

As to the general condition of common schools in the County, I think it is improving, though not as rapidly as we could wish.—There are many teachers in the County who are well qualified to discharge their duties, and to engage in their labors with a good degree of interest. There have been common schools in this County, this summer, which would be an honor to any town, age, or nation. And there have been others, which were a disgrace to the teacher, to the committee who employed her, and to

every one who patronized her. Generally, in those towns where the law is popular, and efficient Town Superintendents are appointed, there is an evident improvement in the schools. One town in the County did not appoint any Superintendent. The Moderator decided that it was not necessary, and said that if they made a nomination he should not try the vote, and all were so indifferent about it that nothing more was said. In two or three other towns, Superintendents were appointed with the understanding that they were to bring in no bill against the town. These facts speak for themselves, and indicate the amount of good which would be effected by our School Law if we were to dispense with County Superintendents.

From Report of Superintendent for Orleans County.

In more than a majority of the towns of this County, I have found their Superintendents exceedingly indifferent to the obligations resting upon them, and, in some instances, these officers are really the most serious obstacles in the way of improvement.— Were it not for the invidiousness of the task, I might furnish you some anecdotes, illustrative of this position, “curious, useful and entertaining.” I have three times called these agents together for the several purposes of consultation and agreement upon a system of operations to be uniform through the County, to instruct, encourage, and animate each other, and to furnish the statistics for the year; but with a most mortifying want of success. The attendance has generally been limited to one poor half dozen, or a less number. Some Town Superintendents I have found wholly incapable properly to discharge the duties of the office, and some others, who would not do their duty, though they understood it very well. In some towns no compensation has been allowed to Superintendents, in others liberal wages, compared with their services, have been given, and in a few, where faithful and efficient officers were appointed, they have labored, and successfully too, for the trifling and altogether inadequate pay.— Justice to this last class requires me to name the towns of Barton, Glover, and Greensboro’ for all the time since Town Sup’ts. have been appointed, Derby and Lowell for the first year, and Holland for the last. It is with real satisfaction that I name MERRICK MANSFIELD, Esq., the intelligent, prompt, and faithful Superintendent of Barton. In this town, the improvement has been so palpable as to silence all gainsaying and unite a whole community in liberal and enlightened measures for carrying it forward to perfection.

But the greatest obstacle in the way of improvement is found in the want of duly qualified teachers. I was, at first, in obedience to your suggestions, exceedingly cautious in rejecting the claims of candidates for a license, and it is not to be doubted that many were licensed without the proper qualifications. It could not be otherwise. With few exceptions, our teachers were all of this class, and many of the excepted few, disapproving of the law requiring an examination to which they had never been subjected, voluntarily relinquished the business at that time. Others took the same course from the apprehension that the process of examination might be too searching for their humble pretensions. This course, then, notwithstanding its liberality to candidates, and designed to prevent a scarcity of teachers, from the above mentioned causes, failed of its object. In some instances, such teachers as intelligent and faithful committees chose, could not be found.

While our progress is thus beset with numerous and formidable obstacles, some advance has yet been made, and a careful comparison of the past with the present, shows how great this advance has been, and discloses the path, hitherto uncertain and obscure, which promises to lead to ultimate success.

Two years ago, it was a common remark that our schools were not what they should be, that much of our money, appropriated to their support, was worse than wasted; and that very few children, comparatively, were really fitted for the proper discharge of the duties of life by all the instruction and discipline they furnished. Generally, as these sentiments prevailed, yet when individuals were asked to name the prominent evils in our system, the legitimate cause of so sad a failure, scarcely any two individuals would agree; and, on the means of amendment, their notions were equally variant. Our citizens had not then thoroughly examined the subject, and though their opinions, as usual, took the form and style of a response from an oracle, the intelligent and experienced perceived them to be mere Yankee guesses; so common and so characteristic of the the speakers. I am, however, well aware, that although I have never found but three persons, who thought proper to attack the plan of improvement in my presence, a great many have been, under other circumstances, quite clamorous in the way of opposition. If this leads us charitably to conclude they were not exactly settled in their own minds, but honestly seeking after the truth, with a purpose to embrace it when found, yet a variety of circumstances and some well authenticated facts prove that an honest ignorance is not the sole cause of this singular conduct. That ignorance has been often attended by a rancorous malignity, growing out of a stupid notion, that the friends of the reform were dishonest in their professions, and that some selfish purposes lurked among their leading motives.

To my former catalogue of obstacles, then, there must be added a purblind jealousy, somewhat tinctured, if not poisoned, by malice and obstinacy, too deeply seated to be readily removed by arguments addressed directly to the interest, the reason, or the conscience of a considerable portion of a dull community around us. These persons, like the pupils of the common schools, need demonstration, visible and tangible; so that the evidence of their own senses may lead to, and enforce the deductions of their thinking powers; but, unlike these pupils, they will not even then yield,

unless the demonstration is presented in a manner before unknown, and by an avenue which they had not anticipated, and therefore not guarded by the muniments of prejudice.

Influenced by these considerations, I sometime since determined to omit the usual routine of general lecturing, and devote my attention almost exclusively to teachers and scholars. Within the present year, I have spent seven weeks in the instruction of teachers,—including five days of examination, and have had abundant evidence of the good effects of these labors. Schools have been better attended, far greater progress has been made by the pupils, and not a single well authenticated case of a school broken up, through the inefficiency of the teacher, has come to my knowledge.

I spent considerable time last winter in visiting schools, having been into every town in the County, except the two smallest. I examined particularly into the manner of teaching, with a view to compare the schools in this respect with those of former years, and was generally satisfied with proof of reformation. Where this was not the case, I called the attention of both teachers and pupils to the manner, which, in my opinion, ought to be adopted, and gave examples and illustrations by a variety of exercises.

This is the path, as I have already intimated, which promises entire success. No parent can long remain blind to the transformation of a rough, ignorant, vulgar and unthinking IDLER to a moderate, respectful and diligent scholar, especially when his own CHILD furnishes the example. Though he may be, from want of early instruction, tardy in making the discovery and reluctant to acknowledge the agent of the change, yet finding his neighbors similarly affected, conviction must ere long be produced.

The first effort is to improve the teachers so as properly to fit them for their duties. Through them, more than through any and all other instrumentalities, we can affect the schools. Let all other agencies be of the most perfect character and all circumstances harmoniously combine for the purpose, yet, if our teachers remain as most of them have heretofore been and many of them now are, our schools can never flourish. Through the teachers, then, the scholars are, in the second place, to be so fast and so far advanced as to furnish to every parent and guardian that demonstration of the power and excellency of the new system, which will remove ignorance, apathy, avarice and prejudice altogether.

Form of Return to be made by District Clerks to Town Clerks.

Heads of families:	Names of children:	
A. B.	C. B. H. B. R. B.	3
G. H.	F. H. W. H.	2
No. of weeks school taught by male teachers,		
No. by female teachers,		
Amount of wages paid male teachers, (exclusive of board,)		\$
Amount paid female teachers,		\$
Cost of board for teachers, for year,		\$
Cost of fuel, furniture and incidentals,		\$
I certify the above to be true returns for District No.		, as required
by law,		
Attest,	C. D., District Clerk.	

Form of Town Clerk's Abstract.

Dist's.	No.	No. chil-	Weeks	Weeks	Wages	Wages	Cost	Cost	Share
	heads of	dren of	taught	taught	paid	paid	of	of	of
	families	school	by	by	males.	females	board	fuel	public
No. 1		age.	males	females				&c.	money
No. 2									

The foregoing is a true statement of the statistics of the common schools in the town of _____, as obtained by me from returns of district clerks, made to me in February last, A. D. 18 ____.

Attest,

C. D., *Town Clerk.*

To District Clerks and Town Clerks..

The returns of District Clerks will embrace the children of school age as they are on the 1st day of January; but the returns are not to be completed and delivered until between the 15th day of February and 1st day of March. The clerk will then make out a statement of the schools that have been taught from the 1st day of the previous April, up to the time of making the returns, including that portion of the winter school which has not been completed—whether one, two, or more weeks—provided it does not extend beyond the last day of March. In short, he is to state, in regard to the length of schools and their expense, what he in good faith expects will be true in regard to them, on the 1st of April. If this return were made out in January, it would be more likely to prove incorrect, from interruption of the school by dismissal of the teacher, sickness or otherwise.

In regard to the item of board, the expense will probably vary, in different parts of the State and under different circumstances, from about one dollar to a dollar and a half, per week. It is not essential that the clerk should be very precise in estimating this item; but it should be stated as near as may be to the medium price in the vicinity.

The Town Clerk can make out his abstract any time in March, after the selectmen have divided the public money, and left with him their statement of such division.

H. EATON, *State Sup't.*

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS-URBANA



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